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SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASPECTS OF EDUCATION IN
TALELAND

M. FORTES

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IN TALELAND

By M. FORTES

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I. INTRODUCTION

THERE is no lack of disquisitions on the role of education in the simpler societies. Africa, in particular, has received enormous attention in this connexion. Commissions and congresses have delivered judgment on education in one or another African society. Missionaries, anthropologists, itinerant journalists, travellers, Government officials, and innumerable others have vouchsafed opinions on the subject until it has become smothered in platitudes and generalizations. But empirical studies of a sociological or psychological kind in field or school are far from numerous. In this paper I shall attempt, in outline, such a study.¹

II. THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

We can commence from two axioms which must be regarded as firmly established both in sociological and in educational theory. It is agreed that education in the widest sense is the process by which the cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation, and that schooling is therefore only a part of it. It is agreed, correlatively, that the 'moulding of individuals to the social norm is the function of education such as we find it among these simpler peoples',² and, it may be added, among ourselves.

Starting from these axioms, anthropologists have explored the conditions and the social framework of education in pre-literate societies. It has been shown that the training of the young is seldom regularized or systematized, but occurs as a 'by-product'³ of the cultural routine; that the kinsfolk, and particularly the family, are mainly responsible for it; that it is conducted in a practical way in relation to the 'actual

¹ An outline of this paper was first presented in a lecture on 'Play Activities of Primitive African Children' which I gave in March 1936 at the invitation of Paul and Marjorie Abbatt. Dr. Lucy Mair and Dr. E. E. Evans-Pritchard have assisted me greatly with their comments and criticism.

² A. W. Hoernlé, 'An Outline of the Native Conception of Education in Africa', *Africa*, iv, 1931. But this axiom has been formulated by many writers, e.g. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, ch. i.

³ *Vide* Hoernlé, loc. cit.; B. Malinowski, 'Native Education and Culture Contact', *International Review of Missions*, 1936.

situations of daily life'.¹ It has been observed that manners and ethical and moral attitudes are first inculcated within the family circle in association with food and eating and with the control of bodily functions. A good deal of discussion has been devoted, also, to what appear to be overtly educational institutions, such as initiation schools and ceremonies, age grades, or secret societies.² It has been proved that direct instruction in tribal history, sexual knowledge, and ritual esoterica is promoted by these institutions.

In this way a good deal of information has been accumulated about *what* is transmitted from one generation to the next in pre-literate societies, about the circumstances of this transmission, and the institutional and structural framework within which it occurs. Of the process of education—*how* one generation is 'moulded' by the superior generation, *how* it assimilates and perpetuates its cultural heritage—much less is known. The problem has, indeed, never been precisely formulated,³ with the result that alleged discussions of primitive education not infrequently prove to be merely descriptions of social structure slightly disguised.

The problem formulated. Education is a social process, a temporal concatenation of events in which the significant factor is time and the significant phenomenon is change. Between birth and social maturity the individual is transformed from a relatively peripheral into a relatively central link in the social structure; from an economically passive burden into a producer; from a biological unit into a social personality irretrievably cast in the habits, dispositions and notions characteristic of his culture. The problem presented by this function of society is of an entirely different order from that presented by the religious or economic or political system of a people. The

¹ R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, pp. 147 ff. This is the most valuable empirical and theoretical contribution to the subject of recent years. There have been various attempts to utilize this principle in planning curricula of schooling in Africa. Cf. W. B. Mumford, 'Malangali Experiments', *Africa*, iii, 1930 and A. D. Helser, *Education of Primitive People*, 1934.

² Cf., *inter alia*, E. W. Smith, 'Indigenous Education in Africa', in *Essays presented to C. G. Seligman*, for a useful commentary on this and other general points referred to in this paper; and J. H. Driberg, *At Home with the Savage*, pp. 232 ff.

³ I refer to Africa here. Margaret Mead in *Coming of Age in Samoa* and *Growing Up in New Guinea* and Firth, *op. cit.*, have done much to clarify it for Oceania. Attention is drawn to the problem in Rev. E. W. Smith's essay, cited above.

former is primarily a problem of genetic psychology, the latter of cultural and sociological analysis. In studying education in a particular society we ought, ideally, to be able to take its cultural idiom for granted, whereas the first task of sociological analysis is to discover the cultural idiom. Thus, in Taleland one often finds a pair of small boys disputing with childish earnestness as to who is senior. Unless one has observed the scope of the principle of seniority in the social structure one is liable to dismiss this as mere childish play of no importance.

Education, from this point of view,¹ is an active process of learning and teaching by which individuals gradually acquire the full outfit of culturally defined and adapted behaviour. In this paper I shall try to delineate briefly how it occurs in one African society, that of the Tallensi of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. As it will be impossible to compass the whole process of social maturation within the limits of this paper, some of the more conspicuous changes and activities only will be examined.

The sampling problem. My observations were made in the course of a field study of the Tallensi the object of which, in accordance with the usual ethnographical method, was the entire society and its culture. It is impossible in such a case—as other anthropologists have found—to follow up a special psychological problem in a manner commensurate with the criteria of experimental research in England. That will only be achieved when specialists can be induced to take over these investigations.

Such material as I am able to present consequently suffers most from sampling deficiencies. Social behaviour among primitive people appears to be more standardized than among ourselves. Yet variations occur, distributed perhaps in accordance with the normal curve of error as among ourselves but perhaps not. The problem has still to be investigated. Ethnographers are principally interested in

¹ An excursus into genetic psychology would be out of place in this paper, but the reader will observe how much it owes, *inter alia*, to F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering*; K. Koffka, *Growth of the Mind*; S. Isaacs, *Intellectual Growth of Young Children*; *Social Development of Young Children*; C. E. Spearman, *Nature of Intelligence*; and to the writings of Jean Piaget (*Language and Thought of the Young Child*, &c.). I have borrowed also from the anthropological writings already cited and from those of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, particularly from their writings on kinship.

'patterns of behaviour', hence they neglect or slur over variations, and sometimes indeed build whole theories on a single occurrence. For most problems of social anthropology variations are of minor importance as compared with the 'typical', and an all-round knowledge of a culture is a sufficient check of typicality. For problems of developmental psychology variations may be of the utmost importance. For example, the first case of thumb-sucking I observed was that of a girl infant 3-4 years old whose mother had recently died. Could it be assumed that this was a clear-cut instance of the thumb being substituted for the nipple? Some time later I came across another little girl, about the same age, thumb-sucking, but her mother was alive and she was not yet fully weaned. Further observation brought a few more cases of this habit to light, but it is so infrequent among Tale children that a single year's observation does not yield sufficient instances to suggest any correlation.

Generally speaking, therefore, small samples form the basis of the observations recorded in this paper. Where norms of development are implied it will be understood that an appreciable, though indeterminate, variability exists.

III. SOCIAL SPHERE OF THE TALE CHILD

The process of education among the Tallensi, as among a great many other African peoples of analogous culture, is intelligible when it is recognized that the social sphere of adult and child¹ is unitary and undivided. In our own society the child's feeling and thinking and acting takes place largely in relation to a reality—to aims, responsibilities, compulsions, material objects and persons, and so forth—which differs completely from that of the adult, though sometimes overlapping it. This dichotomy is not only expressed in our customs, it comes out also in the psychological reactions which mark the indivi-

¹ I am aware that the unqualified manner in which this proposition is formulated here invites the immediate objection that it cannot possibly hold for the new-born infant, or even for the child who is inarticulate and does not yet walk or crawl. I would suggest in answer that it is impossible empirically to observe the point at which the child's affective orientation to its cultural environment first receives its bias; and also, that recent psychology and anthropology would support me in attaching basic importance to the earliest infantile responses of a child as determinants of later interests.

dual's transition from the child's world to the adult's—e.g. the so-called negative phase or adolescent instability which has been alleged to be universal in our society.¹ It is unknown in Tale society.² As between adults and children, in Tale society, the social sphere is differentiated only in terms of relative capacity. All participate in the same culture, the same round of life, but in varying degrees, corresponding to the stage of physical and mental development. Nothing in the universe of adult behaviour is hidden from children or barred to them. They are actively and responsibly part of the social structure, of the economic system, the ritual and ideological system. Psychological effects of fundamental importance for Tale education follow from this. For it means that the child is from the beginning oriented towards the same reality as its parents and has the same physical and social material upon which to direct its cognitive and instinctual endowment. The interests, motives, and purposes of children are identical with those of adults, but at a simpler level of organization. Hence the children need not be coerced to take a share in economic and social activities. They are eager to do so. This does not mean that Tale children are altogether passive in the hands of their parents. Temperamental idiosyncrasies in children strike the observer at a glance. Tantrums, disobedience, destructiveness, and other aggressive outbursts occur sometimes. Among youths and adults misfits and incompetents can be found. But even they live for the same ends and have the same objective values and interests as the majority.

The unity of the social sphere is the more marked in Tale society since they have almost no social stratification within a genealogical or local community. There are no class or rank cleavages, nor highly organized and exclusive economic, political, or ritual associations cutting across the local, genealogical segmentation; and the social division of labour is rudimentary. The pattern of existence is the same for all members of a given community, varying only in texture or tone from individual to individual. The social sphere is differentiated only as between communities which are generally localized clans or lineages. Thus, the blacksmith lineage of Sakpée is unique, as

¹ See G. Murphy, *Experimental Social Psychology*, pp. 429–32, for a critical discussion of this question.

² Cf. also Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*.

compared with its neighbours, in respect to those components of its culture connected with its craft. Only sons of that lineage may be taught the craft of the smith; and even those who through lack of inclination or ability do not learn it share the ideology associated with it and submit to ritual and moral constraints in virtue of this. Because of their traditional craft the men of Sakpee do not eat the hedgehog until they have successfully made a piece of ironwork; and when they were driven from the Tong Hills, abandoned their homes and property but carried with them the sacred anvils. Similarly, the social sphere of the Hill Tallis contrasts in many respects with that of their Namoo neighbours on account of their different ritual systems.

Yet it is necessary to note that these differences do not detract from the essential homogeneity of the social sphere for all the Tallensi. They are differences in the substance of some cultural definitions, not in the forms and functions of institutions. The totemic taboos of the Hill Tallis are exactly paralleled by the prohibitions of first-born children eating the domestic fowl among the Namoos. What their sacred groves and initiation rites mean to the former, their first ancestor, sacred drums, and the chiefship mean to the latter. The psychological substratum of social behaviour is the same in both groups and in their associated clans, with a sole exception. The initiation cult of the Hill Tallis does give a bias to their ideology and so to their social sphere which the Namoos lack.¹ In our present inquiry these differences may be neglected since the dynamic relationships of the individual to his community are the same everywhere in Taleland. Whether a child is trained as a blacksmith or as a farmer, and whether he is inducted into the ritual and ideology of the ancestor cult alone, or into that of the sacred groves as well, the principles are the same.

This background will be continuously discerned in our study of Tale education. But a few clinching observations may be cited here to show that the child is not merely a supernumerary element of his society but thinks and feels himself to be a part of it.

1. I was walking with Samane and his two small sons (8-9 years)²

¹ See M. Fortes, 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', *American Anthropologist*, vol. xxxviii, no. 4.

² All ages are estimated, but the probable error of such an estimate is at least 12 months.

across a recently sown field of early millet already a few inches high. I chanced to tread on a shoot. Immediately one of the small boys stooped and carefully raised and replanted the blade of millet. 'Why did you do that?' I asked. 'Don't you know that is our food?' he replied reproachfully.

2. Every small boy of 6-7 years and upwards has a passionate desire to own a hen, and many of them are able to realize this ambition. If you ask a small boy why he wants a hen he will reply in almost the same words as an adult uses to explain the importance of 'things' (*bon*). 'If you have a hen it lays eggs, and you take the eggs and breed chicks, then you can sell the chickens and buy a goat, and when the goat breeds you can sell its offspring and buy a sheep, and when the sheep breeds you can sell its offspring and buy a cow, and then you can take the cow and get a wife.'

3. Maanyeya, a little girl of about 9-10 years, said that she had eaten none of the meat of last night's sacrifice. 'Why?' I asked. 'When they sacrifice to Zukək', she explained gravely, 'women don't eat of the meat. If they do, they will never bear any children, they become sterile.' 'What's that to you?' I said. 'Am I not a woman? Who wants to be sterile?' she responded almost indignantly.

4. I was playing with Taramba and Yindubil (8-9 years), sons of the same joint family, and their friends. We were discussing parents. Taramba and Yindubil, speaking together, told me the story of the latter's mother. Three or four years ago she had run away from their father to marry another man. They said, in the very words that an adult member of the family would use, speaking seriously: 'She ran away and took our belly [that is, she was pregnant by their father] and went and bore over there, so our child is there. Then she bore another child there. When our child is big enough we will separate it [*pohg*—the technical legal term] and bring it home.' These two were thus identifying themselves completely with the family, mother-child attachments notwithstanding.

Such examples could be multiplied tenfold, but they will suffice at this stage.

The adult attitude about education. Education is not an entirely unwitting process among the Tallensi. They set a high, and indeed over-determined, value on their culture, and are fully aware of the fact that

its continuity depends upon adequate transmission to their descendants. Their social structure, which is built up on the lineage system, and their economic organization put a premium on this, and a significant motive for stressing the continuity of their culture arises from their ancestor cult. Every Talɔŋa desires sons so that there may be some one left to pour libations and make sacrifices to him after his death. The ancestor cult and family morality combine to imbue every man and woman with an intense sense of their continuity, both physical and psychological, with their parents on the one hand and their children on the other. A man feels a moral compulsion to pass on his private possessions, his craft, tools, and knowledge to his son, a woman to her daughter. He has the same feeling about carrying on a craft or cult which had been practised by a parent. Ironwork is not merely a profitable craft to the blacksmiths of Sakpee; it is a religious duty to their ancestors.

The most conspicuous affective moment in the religious system of the Tallensi is this sense of moral obligation to parents and children. It is the counterpart of the notion that the sins of the fathers will be visited on the offspring even unto the third and fourth generation. Last year, for instance, Kuwaas had to promise heavy sacrifices to expiate the sin of his grandfather, who was responsible, three generations ago, for the ravaging of his clan settlement by the Hill Talis.

The idea of education is, therefore, not only understood but also frequently formulated in discussions and conversations. A chief once observed to me that children learn who their fathers and ancestors (*banam ni yaanam*) were by listening at sacrifices. 'Our ancestor shrines are our books', he said. Nyaanzum, a man of 45-50, put these conceptions neatly and precisely one day when we were discussing some particularly secret ritual matters. His 'grandson',¹ a youth of about 25, was with us. 'Shall we send him away?' I asked. 'No,' he replied, 'if he listens it doesn't matter. He will not gossip to any one. And when some day I am no longer here, is it not he who will take it on? If he listens will he not know, will he not acquire wisdom?' When children are very small, he explained, they know nothing about religious things. 'They learn little by little. When we go to the

¹ Kinship terms placed between inverted commas are translations of native terms indicating classificatory kin.

shrine they accompany us and listen to what we say. Will they not [thus] get to know it?' His own small son Badiwona (6-7 years) is extremely devoted to him. One day, affectionately patting the child, he said: 'When we come out in the morning, and if he doesn't see me, he seeks about for me. If he doesn't find me he won't rest. That is why I had him initiated last year. Whatever I do he also sits and listens. Will he not get to know it thus? And when I am gone will he not say that when he was a child he used to go about with his father and used to see how his father did this and that? This is my child and I am teaching him uprightness. If he is about to do anything that is not seemly I tell him, so that when he grows up he will know upright ways.'¹

Education, it is clear, is regarded as a joint enterprise in which parents are as eager to lead as children to follow. In consequence of this attitude adults are very tolerant of children's ways and especially about their learning. A child is never forced beyond its capacity. This is seen most clearly in relation to the pivotal economic activity, agriculture. However skilful a boy may be with his hoe, he will not be forced to do as much work as an adult. Men often restrain their sons of 12-14 from joining the adults in hoeing on the grounds that over-exertion is harmful. Again, women do not take daughters of 9-10 on firewood expeditions to the bush.

That skill comes with practice is realized by all. When adults are asked about children's mimetic play they reply: 'That is how they learn.' Thus when a boy is 7 or 8 his father buys him a small bow so that he can go and learn marksmanship in play with his comrades. Yet the existence of individual differences in ability, both amongst children and amongst adults, is recognized and cited with reference to the acquisition of skill. Rapid learning or the acquisition of a new skill is explained by *u mar nini pam*, 'he has eyes remarkably', that is, he is very sharp. A friend of mine who was a cap-maker told me how he had learnt his craft, as a youth, from a Dagban by carefully watching him at work. When he was young, he explained, he had 'very good eyes'. This conception of cleverness is intelligible in a society where learning by looking and copying is the commonest manner of achieving dexterity both in crafts and in the everyday manual activities.

¹ He learns—*u bamhara*, cognate with *ban*, to know; I teach him—*mpanumi*.

At the same time, no one hesitates to punish when it seems to be merited. A child who neglects a task entrusted to him or her may expect to be rebuked or even chastised. Incidents such as the following occur frequently. Strolling through Puhug one morning in June when the early millet was ripening, I stopped to chat with Tampəyar, a young man of 25 or so. Suddenly there came the sound of furious railing from his father's house-top. 'Your ears don't listen. Can't you look after your cattle properly, you good-for-nothings, you things-with-sunken-eyes. . . .' A voice from a neighbouring house-top joined in to the same effect, adding: 'I'll come down and thrash you.' The objects of these fulminations were two small boys, about 9-10 years, who were driving some cattle out to pasture. They were dawdling and their beasts stopped to munch at the millet. The rebuke had the desired effect. Tampəyar's comment was to point to a scar on his body where for the same crime he had been so severely whipped, as a small boy, that a suppurating wound resulted.

Disciplinary punishment is also administered at times. A small boy is told to go and scare the birds from the fields. He refuses. A hard smack on the haunches sends him scampering.

Nevertheless, I have never observed vindictive punishment or malicious bullying, either of children by adults or of young children by older ones. Indeed, punishment appeared to me to be extremely rare among the Tallensi, as compared with ourselves. It is thought to be necessary sometimes to use rough measures in teaching morals and manners, but not in teaching skills. A very intelligent elder once declared *nyen pu mugx ibii la u ku nyəya yam*, 'If you don't harass your child, he will not gain sense.' This view is held by many. But, as the context of conversation showed, what he meant was not so much corporal punishment as that constant supervision is necessary in the training of children for life.

The concept of 'yam'. Tallensi often use the concept *yam* when discussing social behaviour. It corresponds to our notion of 'sense' when we refer to a 'sensible man', or 'sound common sense'. As the Tallensi use the term it suggests the quality of 'insight'. Its range of usage is wide. If it is said of some one *u mar yam pam*, 'he has a great deal of sense', the implication is that he is a man of wisdom, or is intelligent, or experienced in affairs, or resourceful. If some one

commits a *faux pas*, or shows lack of understanding, or misbehaves morally the comment is *u ka yam*, 'he has no sense'. The concept is used to refer both to qualities of personality and to attributes of behaviour. It is applied also in a genetic sense to describe the social development of the child. A normal child between the ages of about 6 and 9 years is said to 'have sense at length'. It knows how to behave in the social situations which confront it, whereas an infant of 3 or 4 years old does not. Yet a 4-year-old having learned bladder and bowel control is said to 'have sense' as compared with a 2-year-old. Similarly Nindayāt, (17-18 years) telling me of his sweetheating, waxed scornful about his own boyish friendship with girls two years before. 'I still had no sense then', he explained. The concept, it will be seen, is generally used relatively to a particular situation.

Children's attitude to education. In Tale society every pupil becomes in some situations a teacher. At the one extreme there are specialized ritual performances which some men do not learn till they are grey, and at the other, the toddler leaning over to play with his nursling brother is teaching the latter something about his environment. This holds right through the age-scale. Considering also the unity of the social sphere, one is not surprised to find that children have the same attitudes about education as their elders. Hence children are rarely unwilling to learn. As a rule, too, they are not ashamed of confessing failure, ignorance, or inability to do or make something. Conversely, children laugh good-humouredly at one another's deficiencies in skill or knowledge, they never jeer. Ridicule is reserved for the correction of uncouth manners, disgraceful morals, or aberrant interests.

Fundamental educational relationships. It will be evident from the preceding analysis that Tale children receive their education not only from the adults but also from older children and adolescents who are always transmitting what they know of the cultural heritage to their younger brothers and sisters and cousins. From the age of 5 or 6 years until they become fully absorbed into the economic system children often go about in small groups. These groups¹ usually consist of

¹ See M. Fortes, 'Kinship, Incest and Exogamy in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', in *Custom is King*, 1936, for ancillary information about these groups. Also M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', *Africa*, ix, 1936, for an outline of their structural context.

siblings, half-siblings, and ortho-cousins of close agnatic kinship, from the same joint family or sublineage group. The composition of a children's group depends upon various factors. The most important of these are the following:

Age and mobility. Infants still requiring care are often carried about by boys and girls attached to a group of older children. Generally speaking, children of the same degree of mobility tend to go about together. Thus one often finds a group comprising children of about 6 to 10 years. But the stage of social development reached by a child is important in this connexion. Hence young children under 10-11, children between 10-11 and the beginning of pubescence, and adolescents all tend to form separate groups.

Sex. Before the age of about 6 years small boys very frequently go about with girls' groups, and small girls, though more rarely, accompany older brothers. After that age as mobility increases and interests diverge the sexes tend to separate. A well-defined sexual dichotomy runs through Tale social life and thought, and the children begin to adopt the cultural definitions of the roles of the sexes in relation to each other about the time that single-sex groups become common. This is associated with a differentiation of their activities on the periphery of the economic system. Thus cowherds are always boys, whereas it is the girls who help with the housekeeping.

The social situation. Yet none of these children's groups resemble gangs. They have no permanent structure. They generally crystallize out in particular situations and the composition of a group depends largely upon the situation. In ritual situations one often finds a somewhat amorphous group of children and young people of a wide age-range. In games and imaginative play, however, it is more usual to meet with small groups of restricted age-range. Pairs and trios of either sex and of nearly the same age, who are almost always siblings or ortho-cousins, often have a more lasting companionship in work and play and provide a nucleus for larger temporary groups, especially in the dry season.

The most fundamental educational relationship of the Tallensi is, however, not that of children to children but of children to parents. It is a complex relationship, as defined in Tale culture, but its principal moments can be readily discerned. On the plane of rational, everyday



A young nursemaid, amusing herself and the baby with a *Kinkayax* rattle



Housekeeping Play. One of the girls combines the duty of looking after an infant with her play. Note the small boy in the party, and the 'utensils'



A small boy 'sacrificing' to his own 'shrine' (posed)



Gleaning groundnuts, one of the ways of learning to use a hoe. The child on the extreme right is a girl

economic and social activities there is co-operation, friendliness and tolerance, almost equality. This is more marked between father and child than between mother and child. A father is always addressed by his personal name, a mother is always called *mma*, my mother. Affectively, however, a powerful tension exists between parent and child. A parent's authority may not be flouted, though he or she is expected to be affectionate and indulgent. Sin, in Tale ideology, is primarily an offence against the person, status, or rights of the living parents, or the parent-images—the ancestor spirits.

The structure of this relationship makes it possible for children to acquiesce immediately in the commands and teachings of their parents or parent-substitutes. Children are, as a rule, very obedient. If they refuse to carry out an order there is usually some very valid reason—acknowledged as such by both parents and children—such as that it is some one else's turn. But the parent-child relationship is educationally fundamental in another sense—it is the paradigm of all moral relationships.

It is worth noting, by contrast, that the relationship between grandparent and grandchild is the reverse of that between parent and child. In this case equality, compatibility and partisanship, as if in league against the generation between them, are emphasized, more particularly by the joking relationship—mutual ragging among the Tal-lensi—permitted between grandparent and grandchild.

The social space. How these relationships function in the educational development of a Tale child is determined by its social space.¹ An individual's social space is a product of that segment of the social structure and that segment of the habitat with which he or she is in effective contact. To put it in another way, the social space is the society in its ecological setting seen from the individual's point of view. The individual creates his social space but is himself in turn formed by it. On the one hand, his range of experiences and behaviour are controlled by his social space, and on the other, everything he learns causes it to expand and become more differentiated. In the lifetime of the individual it changes *pari passu* with his psycho-physical and social development.

¹ This term is employed here for want of an apter one. It has been used in a different sense by Simmel and others.

In Taleland an infant remains confined to the house for the first three to six months or even longer. During this period its social space is extremely restricted. It has effective social relationships with its mother, sometimes its grandmother or a co-wife of its mother, or an older sibling or half-sibling, and its father—in this order of frequency and intensity. At the age of 3 to 4, when it is beginning to talk fluently and can run about, its effective range of contacts includes all the members of the joint family and probably those of closely neighbouring related joint families. It is beginning to associate with groups of other related children belonging to its immediate milieu and to know the topography of its parental homestead and its immediate surroundings. By the age of 6 or 7 it is being taken on visits to its mother's brother's house (*ahab yir*) and begins to incorporate into the texture of its life its relationships with its mother's people and their settlement. A little later it commences to take a share in very simple economic duties. In this way the child's social space is continuously expanding as it grows older. The educational agencies to which it is subjected become more numerous and more diverse and its experiences more variegated as it participates in an ever-increasing range of social situations. With adolescence a great increase in mobility ensues and a new interest emerges—the opposite sex as potential spouses. This coincides with the beginning of real economic responsibility. When he reaches adulthood, the individual's social space is a function of the entire social structure in its complete ecological setting.¹ He should be capable of appropriate behaviour in any social situation which may confront the normal Taləŋa. He is a full citizen—which means that he is actually or potentially subject to the whole gamut of constraints inherent in Tale society.

In the evolution of an individual's social space we have a measure of his educational development. In Taleland this is brought about not only by accretion to, but also by differentiation of, his or her field of social activity. Sex, for example, is a differentiating factor of great

¹ A person's social space is not equivalent to the entire social structure since it is included in the latter, which is never fully known to or acted on by the individual. Take, for instance, the Tale joint family. As a structural unit it can be easily distinguished and described by the anthropologist; but each member's view of the whole is unique—that of the head of the joint family is different from that of his wife or son—yet all derived from the same single unit of structure.

significance. From childhood on a person's relation to the economic system is chiefly determined by sex. In the kinship system sex operates as a differentiating factor from an equally early age, from the time, in fact, when a child learns to designate like-sex siblings by different terms from opposite-sex siblings. Local, lineage, or family institutions also act as differentiating factors, though not in the same way. This is a consequence in part of the peculiarities of Tale political structure. Local groupings, clans and lineages are asymmetrically linked *inter se* and with communities outside the Tale area proper by political, genealogical, territorial, or ritual ties. The most striking case of this sort is presented by the Hill Talis who have immemorial ritual links with villages and genealogical groups among Dagomba, Mamprussi, Bulisi (Bulisa), Woolisi (Kassena), Mossi, and other neighbouring peoples. Each of the Hill communities has its exclusive associates in these foreign areas. The people of Sii were traditionally associated with the Bulisi, the people of Gorogo with the Woolisi, the Kpata'ar clan with certain villages of Black Dagomba, and so forth. There was in former times, and is even more so now, a constant traffic between the Tong Hills and the outside areas linked with the clans dwelling there—pilgrims coming to the Fertility Shrines in the Hills and Talis paying ceremonial visits to their associates. But the economic and political by-products of this traffic were most important. In this way a range of geographical and social contacts was, and is, available to a member of the Hill clans which no Namoos had, and among the Hill clans themselves the actual contacts varied from clan to clan. The Namoos again have their traditional political associates among the Mamprussi. It is especially interesting to note that the Mamprussi associates of the Hill Talis and the Mamprussi associates of the Namoos belonged to a single political structure; yet the latter would not, a generation ago, have hesitated to overpower and enslave any Hill Talis they encountered defenceless.

Factors of this sort become significant only after adolescence and more so in the life of men than of women; but they are operative even in childhood. The Black Dagomba guests at a Kpata'ar elder's homestead are familiar figures to his children; and one sign of the interest taken in them by the children is the fact that most Kpata'ar youths understand and easily speak the dialect of the Black Dagomba, whereas other Tallensi do not.

The specific genealogical links of a family act in a similar way. In the extreme case, they may alter a person's whole life. The story of Puvələmra is typical, though such occurrences are not usual. He was a Kpatia man whose parents had died in his boyhood. For special reasons he had come to live with his mother's brother at Gbizug. There he grew up, and when I met him, a man of 35-40, he was to all intents a Gbizug man, a complete partisan of that lineage, professing its ideology, subject to its ritual restrictions, and practising the craft of leatherwork as he had learnt it from his mother's brother. He will probably return to Kpatia when he succeeds to his patrimony, there to be assimilated to a rather different ritual system, but transmitting to his sons and grandsons the art of leatherwork and the habits of industry learnt from his mother's brother. Many Tale lineages trace peculiar features of their residence or kinship, or the possession of special ritual, medical, or technological knowledge, to an ancestor with a history like that of Puvələmra.

Finally, the phase of family history coinciding with an early period of a person's education—the status of one or more senior members of his family, or the holding of ritual or political office by any of them—may have a significant differentiating influence on his or her social space. The homestead of a lineage or clan head is the focus of inter-communication both of the constituent parts of that grouping, the sublineages and joint families, and of the lineage or clan with its neighbours, not only in secular affairs but also in ritual matters. This is even more evident with people who hold offices. There is a constant coming and going of people at the house of a chief or clan-head: a complainant has brought a case to lay before the chief; the elders of the clan have come to consult him about the rain; somebody's daughter recently married has deserted her husband and the indignant son-in-law is brought to the clan-head to discuss the affair; a distant cognatic kinsman has brought a goat to sacrifice to the spirit of the supreme ancestor of the lineage; orders have been received that the young men must turn out for rest-house repairs in two or three days; and so forth. Transactions of this sort generally take place in public and the children of the house are always avid listeners. If any one has to be summoned or a message delivered a youth or a small boy is sent.

The members of such a house, especially those who have reached

or passed adolescence, have a wider range of direct contacts with the social structure and their culture than their less privileged contemporaries. In Taleland, it is true, these differences tend to get smoothed out in the course of a person's lifetime owing to the uniformity of the culture and the homogeneity and cohesion of the social structure. Every lineage or clan member is at home in the house of the head, and important affairs are never discussed unless every branch of the grouping is represented. Again, eldership and office circulate from sublineage to sublineage, and the classificatory kinship system spreads the range of identification between the units of the structure widely. Nevertheless, the differential influence of this factor is significant from the educational point of view since our emphasis is on the stage of an individual's life-history at which it operates. The effects are strikingly observable both at the time it is operating and especially in the character of the mature man or woman. An amusing instance of the former is the following: Deāmzeet of Puhug was elected elder under somewhat dramatic circumstances. Next morning, near his homestead I met his small grandsons of about 6-7 years old. Quite spontaneously they started telling me the story of the exciting events of the past two or three days, obviously repeating the talk that they had heard and only half understood in the family circle. They told me what the other elders had said and what the chief had said and how Deāmzeet had summoned a diviner to consult. 'Deāmzeet is the father of all of us,' said one of them, 'and he has a big farm.' They ran off to show me the boundaries of the farm he had recently inherited as head of the sublineage. As we passed the family graves they pointed out, solemnly, the tomb of Deāmzeet's predecessor, who had no doubt been frequently referred to in the last few days. These were all matters which would normally not have occurred within the purview of children of their age.

Instances of the effect on his adult character of such an expansion of an individual's social space during his youth were so numerous as to suggest a general rule. I always found that, allowing for variation in ability and personality, men whose fathers had been elders or office-holders at a time when they themselves were old enough to take an interest in public affairs as spectators or participants were better informed than the average person, and tended to assume the lead in

social and ritual activities. The natives themselves recognize this. It often happens that a man who has not had the advantage of such a training succeeds to eldership or office and has to depend upon the advice and assistance of younger men who have been more fortunate in this respect.

IV. THE DYNAMIC CHARACTERS OF TALE EDUCATION

Learning and teaching proceeds within the structural framework and subject to the cultural conceptions outlined in the preceding pages. We must now investigate its dynamic characters. The educational development of a Tale child may be regarded as the gradual acquisition of an ensemble of *interests*, *observances* and *skills*. What these are and how they are acquired constitutes our next inquiry. It is basically a psychological problem, tantamount, up to a point, to analysing the observations already recorded at a different level of behaviour.

An exhaustive investigation will not be attempted in this paper. The detailed exposition of Tale child psychology which should be the foundation of such an investigation cannot be undertaken here, nor would it be practicable to try to follow out the complex pattern of Tale education in all its ramifications in a limited space. I propose, therefore, to discuss only a few of the major trends and significant processes. Learning and teaching is a composite process, a network of interacting factors. For the purpose of analysis it will be necessary to isolate some of the variables, but it will have to be borne in mind that in the actual life-history of a Tale man or woman they occur only in interaction with one another and with numerous others.

The determinants of social behaviour. From the genetic point of view social behaviour is determined by four groups of factors—physiological, psychological, social, and cultural. If we observe a child learning to walk, we can easily distinguish these factors. It cannot start walking until it has reached a certain degree of physiological maturity. As it practises it learns to plan its efforts so as to avoid falls or trying to accomplish too much at a time—a psychological achievement, depending partly on its level of intelligence. Again, a child learns to walk in response, partly, to stimulation, encouragement and even training given by some or all of the people who come

into its social space. The most important of these is, universally, its mother or some one who acts as mother. Finally, there will be culturally defined ways of encouraging and stimulating or restraining a child in these efforts.

In Taleland these factors of social behaviour are notably inter-correlated. In general there is a marked parallelism between the trend of physiological and psychological development and that of social and cultural development—unlike our own society in certain strata of which social development lags behind psycho-physical development. A girl of 16 or so in Taleland is not only physiologically mature but has accepted the role of a mature woman in the psychological and social sense. She is married, she has economic duties to perform, she is socially responsible. A boy of the same age is pulling his full weight in the economic system, and it is regarded as entirely reasonable that he should be thinking of marriage and sex life, though it may be four or five years before he finds a wife. It should be added that physiological development among the Tallensi is probably somewhat slower than among ourselves. Accurate age norms could not, as will readily be appreciated, be established, but I have estimated that the average age of walking is about 2 years, of talking about 3 years (though single words like *mma*, my mother, and names of members of the family are used with infantile approximation at about 2 years). As far as one can judge by somatic indications, pubescence in boys commences at about 14 years. Girls, according to my wife's observations, do not as a rule menstruate before the age of about 15–16 years, by which time they have frequently been married for a year or two.

This close correlation between psycho-physical and social development is reflected in the notion held by the natives that physiological growth is a natural process, like the growth of plants and animals. The Tallensi have no elaborate transition rites to mark the passage from one stage of growth to another. Unlike many other West African peoples, they accept the onset of puberty in boys and girls, which they recognize by special terms, with the same casual rationality as they accept the cycle of time itself. Health and well-being of the body must be safeguarded with all the resources of their empirical and magical knowledge, but growth in itself is not a matter of cultural emphasis. It is of the very nature of human life. It emanates from

Naawun, Heaven, the *ultima ratio* of Tale philosophy, corresponding in this context to our notion of Nature.

In keeping with this conception of physical growth, children are *expected* to acquire, in due course, the elementary bodily skills—sitting, crawling, walking, running, hand-eye-mouth co-ordination in eating, and so forth. There is no deliberate training in these skills. Parents and older siblings take an affectionate and attentive, though sporadic, interest in an infant's psycho-physical development, but do not resort to special methods of fostering it. An infant beginning to crawl is allowed to practise more or less at will, watched by mother or sister, brother or father, lest it injure itself. An infant beginning to walk is supported for a bit, now and then, by an older child, or a parent, or any one to whose care it happens to be entrusted. There is no such thing as regular training in these skills. The attention given to an infant in these respects is a function not only of its stage of physiological development, but even more so of the practical exigencies of the situation with which the parent or older child has to cope at the moment. It is quite usual to see incidents such as this: a woman is gathering guinea corn-stalks for her fire some 20–30 yards from the homestead. Her infant son of about 2½ years totters along the path to her calling out *mma, mma* (my mother). She appears to take no notice until he reaches her. He stands beside her, clutching her thigh tightly, while she finishes tying the bundle of guinea corn-stalks. She puts the bundle on her head and, as she wants to get back into the house as quickly as possible, swings the infant—by one arm—up to her hip and marches off. If she were not in a hurry she might walk back slowly, allowing the infant to follow her and throwing back encouraging remarks to him.

Since nobody thinks infants need special training by particular persons, the natives have a habit of bandying them about from one member of a family to another, though grandparents, co-wives, and other children of the same mother are the most usual nursemaids. A Tale child must, from earliest infancy, learn to co-operate to its fullest capacity with the demands of practical necessity: it must learn to adapt itself to such facts of reality as the economic preoccupations of its mother. I have often seen children of about 12–18 months left sitting in the shade for half an hour or longer, quite alone, while their

mothers are busy with some household task. A healthy infant will remain sitting thus, almost motionless, playing with a fragment of calabash, a stick, or the sand—for the idea of giving an infant a toy or some attractive trinket to occupy it when it is left alone does not occur to the Tallensi. On the other hand, when an infant clamours for attention there is always some one of its kinsfolk near at hand to render it.

The native point of view about physical growth was well illustrated in the case of two infants belonging to a single extended family which I knew well. The younger infant was a lively, healthy, inquisitive girl of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 years old already toddling about and exploring the world. The other infant, a boy about 3 months older, had been puny and ailing from birth and, though obviously intelligent, was chronically fretful and dependent and had not yet begun to walk. In Taleland the number three is symbolical of maleness, four of femaleness. Hence it is said in their folk-lore that boys begin to walk and talk in their third year, girls in their fourth. Yet the glaring discrepancy in development between these two infants caused no anxiety to the parents of the boy, except about his health. They realized clearly the connexion between his retardation and his health, but were entirely complacent about the former. That he would walk and talk in due course was taken for granted.

The expectation of normal behaviour. It will be evident from these examples that in the cultural idiom of the Tallensi age is not conceived as a significant factor in psycho-physical or social development. Yet relative seniority determines status and rights even in children's groups and their notion of time is explicit and clear. They think of genetic development primarily in terms of maturity, which is a synthetic concept embracing both physiological and behavioural signs. Growing up, in other words, is the evolution of one's social personality as it approximates closer and closer to the fully grown, mature adult. Just as this point of view precludes deliberate and standardized methods of training children in the rudimentary bodily skills such as walking, talking, and eye-hand co-ordination in eating, so it would be incompatible with a didactic attitude about bowel and bladder control or about sexual habits and knowledge.

This point of view gives rise to a factor of great importance in Tale education, the *expectation of normal behaviour*. In any given social

situation everybody takes it for granted that any person participating either already knows, or wants to know, how to behave in a manner appropriate to the situation and in accordance with his level of maturity. An effort to learn is thus evoked as an adaptation to the demands of a real situation. It is not that people expect one another to act with automatic and machine-like precision; for in point of fact Tale culture tolerates considerable elasticity in the patterns of behaviour. We have an analogy in our own culture in the expectation entertained by most adults that little girls want to play with dolls and little boys with toy engines. We act on this expectation whenever we buy presents for children. How exactly this influences the play of Western children has not been investigated, but there can be little doubt that it does. We expect children to know how to play without being taught.

In contrast to this, many Western mothers nowadays do not expect their children to acquire clean habits simply in the normal course of development, and therefore set out to train them deliberately from earliest infancy in these habits. Tale mothers never train their children deliberately to be clean. When they reach the stage of walking and talking easily, children are expected not to defecate indoors in the daytime but to be asked to be taken outside or to run out themselves. A lapse meets with an expression of disapproval and a reprimand: 'You are big enough already. Can't you go outside to defecate?' The child learns in response to the expectation that it is capable of normal behaviour in that respect.¹ Similarly, infants are expected to

¹ The example is intended to illustrate how the expectation of normal behaviour acts but, of course, other factors are also involved in the Tale child's acquisition of clean habits. These habits are learnt gradually, not all at once. Before it can walk or talk, its mother or an older child sometimes takes it outside when it shows signs of wishing to defecate. By the time it is expected to be clean it is being drawn into the play-activities of slightly older children, most of which take place out of doors. The need to adapt itself to the habits and standards of its older playmates is a strong stimulus to the child to learn not only bowel and bladder control but also the rules of etiquette. As the Tallensi have no special sanitary arrangements, but excrete in the open anywhere near the homestead, taking care only to keep a little way from the paths and from any people who may be about, it is easy for a child to learn the adult convention from the example of older children and adults. Clean habits, like other skills, are learnt as organic responses (see below, p. 10). I shall refer to this matter again, in another context, in a later section.

understand or to be eager to understand the language of adults, and no one would think of using 'baby talk' to them.

As normal behaviour is always expected, no one hesitates to correct a child or adult who behaves inappropriately through ignorance, and the correction is generally accepted with alacrity and ease. If children are allowed to be present at the activities of adults, they are assumed to be interested in and to understand what is being said and done. No one would inhibit his conversation or actions because children are present, or withhold information upon which adequate social adjustment depends from a child because it is thought to be too young. Tallensi, therefore, are not surprised at the comprehensive and accurate sexual knowledge of a 6-year-old, though direct instruction in these matters is never given. As with the ordinary skills and interests of daily life, they expect children to want to know such things. *Naawun mpaan ba*, 'Heaven teaches them', they say, or, as we should put it, it is perfectly natural.

It is known that some people learn more quickly and accurately than others, that variations in skill and ability exist. But the idea of precocity or retardation as a quality of a child's character has no place in Tale thought. A child may intrude on a situation where some one of his or her degree of maturity has no business to be and will be categorically dismissed then; but it would never be rated for being 'old-fashioned'. Every child is expected to be eager to know and to do as much as its social space and its stage of psycho-physical development permits. Hence, though it is clearly recognized that knowledge, skill, and capacity for social adjustment grow cumulatively, the Tallensi have no technique of isolating a skill or observance from the total reality and training a child in it according to a syllabus, as, for instance, we train children in dancing, the multiplication table, or the catechism. Tale educational method does not include drill as a fundamental technique. It works through the situation, which is a bit of the social reality shared by adult and child alike.

The conceptions and practices we have been considering constitute the significant factors in education by participation in practical tasks which is often described as the distinctive method of primitive societies and is as conspicuous in Taleland as in every other pre-literate country. It may be observed that even in Western society the

principal method of education is by participation. A child repeating the multiplication table is participating in the practical activity appropriate to and defined by the school; but measured by the total social reality it is a factitious activity, a training situation constructed for that purpose. The Tallensi do not make systematic use of training situations. They teach through real situations which children are drawn to participate in because it is expected that they are capable and desirous of mastering the necessary skills.

Corresponding to this contrast in method we can observe a contrast in psychological emphasis. The training situation demands atomic modes of response; the real situation requires organic modes of response. In constructing a training situation we envisage a skill or observance as an end-product at the perfection of which we aim and therefore arrange it so as to evoke only motor or perceptual practice. Affective or motivational factors are eliminated or ignored. In the real situation behaviour is compounded of affect, interest and motive, as well as perceptual and motor functions. Learning becomes purposive. Every advance in knowledge or skill is pragmatic, directed to achieve a result there and then, as well as adding to a previous level of adequacy.

The expectation of normal behaviour and organic response operate also in the education of a Western child, e.g. when it is learning speech or manners. In Taleland it is the most effective factor in the inculcation of a wide range of social behaviour from bowel and bladder control to ritual notions, and from economic skills to sexual habits.

Interests, skills, and observances. We have seen, now, that a Tale child acquires the interests, skills and observances which comprise the repertoire of adult social behaviour not in discrete categories but in a synthetic combination. But it is necessary, for analytical purposes, to define such categories of behaviour. They refer to forms of overt behaviour and not to the psychological functions or mechanisms subsumed therein.

Interests. By *interest* I mean simply the observable fact that, according to their level of maturity, Tale children and adults spontaneously show preference for some activities rather than others; that they have a selective orientation in their social space, e.g. reacting to some people more readily than to others; that they obviously seek to satisfy

aims and desires in their activities and show a sense of purpose and sustained effort. Food, for example, is one of the dominant interests of Tale children. In 1936 the ground-nut crop surpassed all anticipations in some districts. An elder, referring to this in conversation a week or two before the crop was harvested, said: 'We have a surfeit of ground-nuts this year. Look at the children. They don't care about their mothers, they don't care about their fathers.' When food is scarce, he explained, children are for ever running in to their mothers clamouring for something to eat. Now they are out all day, and if they feel hungry they simply pull up a handful of ground-nuts to chew and are satisfied. Food, indeed, remains one of the dominant interests of a Taləŋa from childhood to old age, and with the confluence of other interests and motives has a great effect on Tale economic life. Between the ages of 6 and 14 the interest of boys in food becomes linked up with other interests which have been developing during that period, e.g. in learning to use the bow and arrow, in the comradeship of boys of about the same size, in primary economic and technical processes such as herding and hoeing, in exploring the environs of the settlement, and so forth. Thus, a group of boys out herding cattle often have their bows and arrows with them, and when the cattle are grazing quietly they will search around for cane rats or birds to shoot as titbits.

From a very early age—before they can walk or talk—until adulthood children show a marked and explicit interest in the activities of their parents and older siblings and other adults with whom they come in contact. This is due, in part, to the unity of the social sphere. The children thus begin to adopt the cultural values of their society in infancy, as has been indicated above in our discussion of the social sphere. It may, however, be worth while repeating that children express a keen interest in farming, in livestock, in ceremonies, dances and recreations, and in the conspicuous current activities of their households, in their kinship relationships, and so forth, from the age of 3 upwards, long before they can actively participate in these affairs. But it is shown quite clearly in their attitudes when they are allowed to be present at adult activities, and in their fantasies as revealed in their talk and play, which revolve round the themes of adult social life.

Another group of interests significant for the educational development of Tale children is connected with their habitat. By the age of

9 or 10 the children are thoroughly familiar with the ecological environment of their clan settlements. They know the economically important trees, grasses, and herbs, e.g., a girl of about 9 once named and showed me nine varieties of herbs used for making soup. They have a fair idea of the gross anatomy of the fowl, small field animals, and larger live stock. But apart from these achievements which lead one to infer the existence of an interest in the natural environment, I was able to obtain some direct evidence thereof. The natives say that small children frequently ask questions about people and things they see around them. However, listening to children's talk for 'why' questions,¹ I was surprised to note how rarely they occurred; and the few instances I recorded refer to objects or persons foreign to the normal routine of Tale life. It would seem that Tale children rarely have to ask 'why' in regard to the people and things of their normal environment because so much of their learning occurs in real situations where explanation is generally coupled with instruction, and because they hear so much adult discussion, in terms of cause and effect, as these are understood by the Tallensi, of the things they are interested in. Yet two examples will prove that even quite small children react with exploratory interest to what is new and unusual. I gave some tiny tin figures of animals to a group of small children to play with. A little boy of about 5 looked intently at the figure of a horse. 'Why does he stoop like that?' he asked, speaking to himself rather than to his companions. But immediately he answered his own question, 'He is eating grass.' On another occasion I observed the 3-year-old son of our cook, pointing to the garbage tin, ask the horseboy: 'Why has that got a lid?'

Again, making clay figures is a favourite diversion of small boys and adolescents. The standard figures are men and women, cows and horses. But a youngster of about 9 or 10 once produced a motorcycle, explaining that he had recently seen the Agricultural Officer arrive on one. Another boy, a little older, once made a roan antelope, explaining that some two years previously he had seen one of these animals which, fleeing from a hunting party, had entered the settlement and been surrounded and killed there.

I have not attempted to give an exhaustive account of the interests

¹ See N. Isaacs in *Intellectual Growth of Young Children*.

which Tale children develop in the course of their education. I have tried to indicate only some typical interests and their relation to the educational process.

Skills. The acquisition of skills also commences in early infancy, with the child's first experiments in motor co-ordination and speech. Bodily dexterity provides merely the foundation upon which are subsequently built up the socially important skills of adult life. They include not only the predominantly manual skills, such as are connected with farming and care of live stock, with hunting, fishing, building, thatching, cooking, housekeeping and gardening, and the technology of specialists, but also non-manual skills, such as a knowledge of the kinship system, of ritual and ceremonial, of economically useful herbs and roots and of others used as drugs to cure illness, of buying and selling, of law and custom—in short, of the whole body of cultural definitions which guide the Taləŋa in his daily existence. Such skills are the end-results of education; and it will be obvious that they represent merely the cognitive and motor aspects of activities rooted in developing interests and fostered by the expectation of normal behaviour. Typical skills will be referred to as we proceed, but one general feature must be noted here. Children in Taleland are remarkably free from over-solicitous supervision. They have the maximum freedom and responsibility commensurate with their skill and maturity. On the one hand they can go where they like and do what they like, on the other they are held fully responsible for tasks entrusted to them. Thus, a 6-year-old is quite often charged with the care of an infant for several hours at a stretch. Girls of 9 or 10 can be seen in large numbers in every market, selling or buying things for their mothers or themselves. Boys of this age and even younger swarm in the markets. One market day I discovered a boy of about 10-11 selling a basketful of leaves used as a food for animals which he had himself collected in the bush near his settlement. He hoped to earn a penny or twopence to buy arrow-heads for himself. Another day a boy of about the same age offered his services to the butcher. He earned a tenth of a penny which he spent on a feed of locust-bean flour for himself and a friend. Similarly, when there is dancing at a homestead, the children of about 6 years and upwards from the whole neighbourhood congregate there and remain till

dawn. They might tell their parents where they are going, but would not be sent for to come home.

Numerous instances could be added to illustrate further the freedom allowed to children. Of the responsibility allotted to them in applying their skills and their appreciation of it, one good example may be quoted. I was chatting with a group of boys, aged about 7-11 years, at sunset one day, when Duunbil, the oldest of them, suddenly exclaimed, clapping his hands in a gesture expressing both amusement and consternation: 'Ma! I've forgotten to untie the goats; I'll get a whipping.' 'You'd better run,' one of the others advised, as he dashed away. His companions explained that he had pegged his father's goats out in the morning to graze and that it was his duty to bring them home again. Goats cannot be left out all night lest hyenas catch them. A few days later I met Duunbil again and he told me, with a grin, that he had not managed to bring the goats in till after dark, but that he had been let off with a mild beating.

Children and adolescents share economic tasks in accordance with their skill and maturity, and they have a strong sense of the rights to which they are entitled in consequence. An adolescent has the right to be adequately fed and supported by his or her parents in return for co-operation in agricultural or domestic work. I have known of youths running away from home when they considered themselves to be badly treated in these respects. Children expect to have their services acknowledged in a similar way. Yindəl, aged about 11, an intelligent and enterprising lad, was already giving his father valuable assistance, both in the care of live stock and in farming. When the great dances came round, Yindəl wanted a new loin cloth. His father refused to buy him one, whereupon Yindəl went on strike, neglected the chickens, the donkeys, the goats and refused to go to the bush farm even after a beating. In the end his father had to yield. *Bii la mar buurt*—'The boy has justice on his side'—he said, when he told me the story.

A similar incident occurred with a man who supplied us with milk for a short while. Money is scarce in Taleland and 2s. 6d. a month is an enviable addition to family resources. Yet one day he came to tell me apologetically that he could no longer sell me milk. Why? His small son, whose job it was to herd the cow, had rebelled. He

used always to milk the cow during the day, in the pasture, when he became hungry; but if he was not going to be allowed to do this because the white man must be supplied with milk, he would no longer drive the cow out to graze.

Increasing skill and maturity, therefore, bring increasing responsibilities but also concomitant rewards—that is, ever closer integration into the system of co-operation and reciprocity which is the basis of Tale domestic economy.¹ The unity of the social sphere, the interest of children in the world of adult activities, and the rapidity with which each advance in educational achievement is socially utilized constitute a ring of incentives which help to explain the eagerness of Tale children to grow up and take their full place in adult life.

Observances. Finally, there are the observances which every Talɔŋa has to learn in the course of his or her life. These comprise ritual, moral and ethical values, norms and obligations, as well as rules of etiquette and standards of correct conduct in general. Some of these types of observances can be readily identified in Tale culture. It is not so easy to determine what exactly are moral and ethical norms and obligations and their place in this culture. Certainly an exhaustive study of this, the most recondite and perhaps fundamental aspect of Tale education, could not be ventured without first precisely establishing the nature of these observances and how they are maintained. For the limited purpose of this paper it will be sufficient to select some representative examples of rules of conduct the violation or neglect of which is repugnant to the cultural idiom of the Tallensi or, otherwise expressed, would be considered blameworthy or disgraceful, sinful or wicked, uncouth or embarrassing to others. To ask how they are learnt is to ask how they are experienced by the growing child at different stages of its development.

To the native these norms have an arbitrary quality as if they require no validation, other than the fact that normal and equable social relations would be impossible without them, that they are indispensable for satisfactory social adjustment.² In Taleland, it is true, learn-

¹ See M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', loc. cit., for a more detailed description of this.

² The argument of this section owes much to the stimulus of Durkheim's *L'Éducation morale*.

ing the correct observances has many points in common with learning skills, but there is a significant difference. When a child is learning a skill he has the test of objective achievement to evaluate his progress and to stimulate him to further effort; when he is learning how to behave properly the only test of attainment is the reaction of other people and his own sense of the adequacy or inadequacy of his conduct. One can observe, in consequence, that both children and adults are very sensitive to ridicule of a lapse in manners or morals but are fairly indifferent to ridicule of poor skill. The contrast between observances and skills is evident when we compare the way in which a child learns to model clay figures, gradually perfecting his technique, with the 'all or none' way, associated sometimes with corporal punishment, in which he is taught to respect other people's property, or the way he is taught his totemic taboos.

Among the Tallensi, as in many other primitive societies, manners and morals are acquired almost as a by-product of the normal social relations between the growing child and the people who constitute his or her social space. The unity of the social sphere and the expectation of normal behaviour have a correspondingly greater influence than in the acquisition of skills and interests. But the critical factor is the tension inherent in the fundamental educational relationships, the authority of parent over child and of senior over junior.

In Tale ideology this is epitomized in the danger attributed to a parent's resentment. If any one who has reached years of discretion behaves in such a way as to incur the resentment and hostility of a parent, some calamity will certainly befall him or her unless he comes formally to beg forgiveness and the injured parent ritually abjures his or her anger.¹ It very often happens that two children of about the same age and members of a single joint family are related as parent and child. They can be seen playing together amicably, squabbling at times, and working together. But when the 'child' is questioned about his playmate, he will say: *nzorumi, on ndoyam la zugu*, 'I fear (respect) him, because he begot me.' This is not merely a formula. Sinkawol (aged 23-5) used to order his 'father', Kyekambe (aged

¹ The connexion between one particular aspect of Tale morality, their notion of incest, and the background of kinship has been discussed in my paper on 'Kinship, Incest and Exogamy', loc. cit.

12-13) about when the lad was helping with the housebuilding and even scold him if he bungled a task. This was legitimate technical instruction. But he declared emphatically that he dare not strike the boy, *on ndoyam la zugu*. From the authority of parent over child is derived that of elder sibling over younger. It is equally absolute. A youth or girl has no hesitation in restraining or correcting a younger sibling with a cuff which often sends the latter off howling at the top of his voice. The authority of seniors in general over juniors is accepted by custom (e.g., among herdboys), though not so absolutely and unquestioningly. It is often maintained by force, or in virtue of superior skill. It is intelligible, therefore, why the Tallensi usually say *ti banam yel nla*, 'our forefathers' matter is this' when they are asked to account for an observance, and why their children say, *bunkora la yel ti la ywala*, 'the grown-ups have told us so'.

Just as all Tallensi, children or adults, recognize the force of authority, even though they sometimes flout it, so they accept the principle of equal rights for equals. One can see this, not only in standardized patterns of behaviour, but, e.g., in the spontaneity with which children share things and activities. When a small boy snares a bird or kills a mouse or lizard he will always share his catch with friends or siblings, apportioning it according to sex and age. A favourite pastime of boys of all ages, from 5 upwards, is wrestling. Sometimes bigger youths stand by to supervise, but always scrupulous fairness is insisted upon, and thus instilled. It is as correct and even praiseworthy to demand what one is entitled to as it is reprehensible to take what one has no right to. A nice illustration, showing incidentally how such principles are sometimes taught, came to my notice during an evening ceremony which had been unduly dragged out. A dozen or more small boys aged from 5 upwards had gathered at the ceremony to wait for a share of the feast which would follow the religious rites. The food was sent out and distributed by an adult, one or two boys of equal size to a dish. Suddenly an elder called out, 'Where is Zuur?' (a small boy of about 5) and rose to look for him. Zuur lay fast asleep in a corner. The old man shook the child roughly to awaken him, and dragged him towards a dish of food upbraiding him, 'Where do you think you will find food after it has all been eaten? You can't control yourself at all.' Zuur, still

somnolent, sat whimpering as he ate, while some one else commented that if you want your share of food you must be there to receive it.

The principle of reciprocity which is thus early learnt in association with siblings and age mates is one of the basic moral axioms of Tale social life. If a man refuses to come to the assistance of a neighbour who has invited a collective hoeing party, the latter will retaliate by refusing assistance to the former at a later date. Often at mortuary ceremonies some one, not obliged by custom to do so, will bring an animal to be slaughtered for the dead, 'because when my father died, he brought a sheep to be killed'. A girl of about 10, after her grandmother's funeral, showed me how half her head had been shaved in the customary way. But her spontaneous explanation was: 'Because, at the feast, when they cook the beans they give me a whole dish to myself.' This moral aspect of Tale social relations, as we can now see, explains the rights which increasing economic skill confer upon a boy or a girl. Those who work for you *deserve* their keep.¹

¹ I have not attempted to track the Tale attitudes towards authority and justice to their roots in infant psychology, as would be necessary for an exhaustive analysis. Some of the phenomena which should be observed in this connexion are not accessible to study by the behaviouristic methods of the field worker. But it may be worth mentioning that one can readily observe the constraint and force which, at some times, the affection and indulgence which, at others, are expressed in the way parents treat their infant children. From the day of its birth an infant is subjected to the agonizing ordeal of a daily bath in steaming medicated water which is so hot that it becomes rigid with pain on the first douche. One sees infants of a few days to about 12 months old arbitrarily held down on their mother's laps while medicated drinking water is forcibly poured down their throats as they struggle and splutter. A few minutes after an infant has been treated thus roughly it will be lovingly suckled, fondled, and caressed by mother or sister, or affectionately dandled by its father. A 3-year-old suddenly frightened runs to its father, or more characteristically to its mother to bury its face between her knees, clutching her thighs, or to snatch at the breast. The same 3-year-old, in a fit of temper, will nag, whimper petulantly, strike its mother with its little fists. No one beats an infant for this. The mother tries to soothe it, or patiently calls some one—husband or co-wife—to come and take charge of the unruly child. This indulgence extends to the excretory processes, and to masturbation, which is overt until puberty in boys. Until it is weaned, at about 3—when it can walk—it has very complete possession of its mother. After weaning, which is generally mild, the child becomes more detached from its mother, who now resumes regular intercourse with her husband. At this age, or even younger, children are often playfully threatened by their fathers. 'I will slaughter you if you do so and so', but they always seem to react with complete equanimity to this. Yet a boy of 4-5 years, suspiciously

Like ourselves, the Tallensi recognize that some observances are merely matters of convention, others are matters of conscience, and a great many have elements of both. Their emphasis, however, differs conspicuously from ours. For example, the notion of cruelty to animals as delinquent or reprehensible would never occur to them. Small boys often catch mice or birds and keep them, tied with a strip of strong grass, to play with for days and eventually kill and eat them. It is, indeed, a crude form of nature study, for they learn a great deal about the habits, the anatomy, and physiology of the animals and birds they ostensibly maltreat in this way. They are never checked, and the suggestion that this was bad (the Tallensi have no expression, as far as I am aware, for our notion of cruelty) was received with amused laughter. It is a natural interest of children and not a moral problem; and it does not produce a general attitude of cruelty to animals. Both children and adults often show great affection for domestic dogs, for example.

Many rules of conduct are observed 'because it is befitting' (*de narāmi*)—or because non-conformity is 'unbecoming' (*de pu narāmi*)—i.e. it rouses embarrassment or ridicule or public criticism. Thus when greeting a superior, a man must sit with legs flat, crossed at the calves, bare-headed, eyes lowered, whereas a woman must crouch on all fours or sit with thighs close together and legs tucked under the buttocks. This latter posture in women is a matter of modesty. Up to about 9 or 10 years of age a little girl can sit in any way, legs spread out if she wishes, although from babyhood she has learnt to sit with legs tucked under. As she approaches puberty she will often be admonished 'sit properly' if she does not sit decorously. It is unbecoming for women to eat the domestic fowl, and I have often heard little girls of 9 or 10 boast that they are already refraining from it. A woman goes naked until she is advanced in her first pregnancy.

eyeing me from the security of his mother's lap, was heard to say that he was afraid I might cut off his penis. The Tale infant, in short, appears to be permitted to gratify all its wish impulses without restraint; yet it must do so in a social world over which it has no control, in which it is a weak dependant. Here, I think, still speaking in terms of superficial psychology, is the germ of the later domination of respect for authority in the child's moral development. It seems probable, from these observations, that the deeper psychology of the process is not unlike that which has been recorded by students of our own children, such as Dr. S. Isaacs.

After that she must wear a perineal band even at night, in the privacy of her own room, for the sake of modesty. Not to do so, *de mara valam*, 'is embarrassing' for her and others. Similarly it is indecorous for a young man, especially if he is married, to go about without a loin cloth. His comrades would scoff at him, womenfolk jeer, and his wife be ashamed. Yet the Tallensi have not the slightest sense of shame about the naked body or any physiological functions, all of which they discuss publicly and openly. Ask any one, child or adult, the sex of an infant and the answer will be to open its legs and expose the genitals with the word 'boy' or 'girl'. An infant's excretory processes arouse no embarrassment and meet with no attempts at regulation. As we have seen it is expected to learn cleanliness in due course. The child is made to understand that excreting indoors is a nuisance to those who have to keep the house clean. No one would dream of chastising an infant for this misdemeanour. These are all matters of decency and decorum learnt without formal instructions as direct adjustments to the social space, through the influence of the expectation of normal behaviour.

It is otherwise with the morality of property. A thief incurs disgrace and universal opprobrium, and even small children of 6 and 7 express contempt for one. A child that steals, like one who neglects a task, can expect a severe beating if his father is a conscientious citizen. 'Don't let Tii (a boy of about 6) come and see your things,' said Batiignwol, a little girl of 7 or 8, to me one day, 'he's a thief. He stole his mother's ground-nuts and meat and his father beat him and tied him up.' Theft is immoral as well as criminal. Lying, by contrast, is considered merely foolish and contemptible. It causes annoyance and a liar's comrades distrust him, but one would not punish a child for lying unless it led to serious consequences. Such misdemeanours, nevertheless, go beyond what is merely 'unbecoming'. They are not nice, *a pu maha*.

Finally there is a type of observance which is a matter of conscience rather than of public approval or reprobation. Many of these have a ritual character and most of them are associated with mystical notions. There are food taboos which must be observed from infancy; there are ritual obligations such as those connected with mourning, which a person may escape till he reaches adulthood, but

which children of 9 or 10 are fully familiar with and the compulsion of which they experience to the same degree as the adults; and there is the whole body of implicit moral norms which regulate the day-to-day life of the family and emerge in the duties of children to one another and to their parents.

I have already mentioned the prohibition in some clans against the eating of fowl by first-born children. By contrast with the voluntary abstention from fowl meat practised by women, this is a taboo of supreme mystical value for these clans and is exactly parallel to the totemic avoidances of other clans. The Hill Tallis, for instance, may not eat tortoise, some may not eat crocodile or python, and others taboo dog. A 5-year-old knows his or her personal or clan taboo, and can state it emphatically. The remedy for a chance infringement of such a taboo is extremely simple—e.g., in the case of the fowl, crushing some fowl droppings in water and giving the child the fluid to drink. Again the supernatural penalty for a breach is of a vague and general kind. In some cases it is thought that it would lead merely to an eruption of scabies on the head; in others it is said that the offender would slowly lose health and strength. These sanctions, however, are not the effective agencies maintaining the observances. Breaches of these rules are exceptional, both among children and among adults. A Talɛja submits to a food taboo in virtue of a configuration of positive habits and dispositions built up in childhood, not through fear of the sanctions. From the time that it is a babe in arms a child is prevented from tasting or even touching any food which it is prohibited from eating. Later it will be called away from where its companions are sitting over a fire roasting titbits of food forbidden to it—‘Come here, you mustn’t eat that; it is forbidden.’ I once observed a child of about 5 standing aloof while a group of his brothers and sisters were consuming a dish of python meat—a prized delicacy. ‘I don’t eat python, it is my taboo,’ he explained, with an expression of complete aversion.

A vivid example of how food taboos are inculcated was provided by a biographical reminiscence of the chief of Tongo who, as a first-born, may not eat fowl. There was talk in his court-room of crops and famine in the old days, when an elder wondered if a man would eat a forbidden animal if he were starving. The chief, holding with

some of his elders that it would be too repugnant even for a starving man to do so, told this story of how he had himself, on two occasions, violated his taboo. When he was a child of perhaps 5 or 6 he was the favourite of his grandfather, as often happens. Some one brought the old man a gift of eggs which he promptly had roasted. He had to go outside to attend to some matter and he left his small grandson to see that no one purloined the eggs. Now an egg is a potential fowl, and is therefore equally taboo with the latter. The chief described how there was a brief struggle between his conscience and his desire, and how he succumbed and ate the eggs. His grandfather was furious when he returned and the child in trepidation lied, accusing a girl who was in the next room. The girl denied the accusation and the small boy's father was called in to adjudicate. He at once suspected his son, but the grandfather angrily defended the boy, who was now too terrified even to speak. The matter was dropped; but the small boy, afraid of his father, remained with his grandfather till nightfall. Then he slunk out, only to be caught at once by his father, who had been waiting for him. His father said nothing, but grimly called for a feather and a large gourd of water. 'Drink,' he commanded, and compelled the child, now sobbing with terror, to swallow the whole gourdful of water. 'Open your mouth,' said the father, and began to tickle the child's throat with the feather until he vomited. 'And now,' said the father, grasping the child's arms tightly and striking him right and left, on buttocks, back and head, 'I'll teach you to eat fowl and steal and tell lies.' 'That was how I learnt not to eat fowl,' the chief concluded amid general laughter. But, he continued, many years later, at the time of the great famine, he with two companions was on his way to a neighbouring district and stopped for the night *en route*. They were extremely hungry, not having had a proper meal for days, and when they were offered porridge and a cooked fowl ate ravenously. Now two of them tabooed the fowl, but they were too hungry to resist. The meal finished, they rose, when suddenly the other man who was not allowed to eat fowl was overcome with nausea and began to vomit. Immediately he himself also began to vomit. They had not, after all, been able to stomach the fowl.

How strongly quite young children feel the compulsion of a ritual obligation was brought home to me when a boy of about 10-11 was

telling me one day about his dead mother. 'I want them to complete her funeral', he said at length, sadly, 'so that I can have my head shaved' (a ritual obligation). 'Why?' I asked. 'Well, is it not my mother?' he said. 'If I don't have my head shaved it is dirt' (ritual uncleanness).

This is typical also of the moral attitudes to the living, to parents and siblings, engendered in the normal course of family life. That is how children learn to be obedient, considerate of others, ready to co-operate, careful of household property, and so forth.

It is evident from the above examples that adjustment to authority and adjustment to equals act together in the child's acquisition of moral observances. But my observations have led me to conclude that authority is effective from an earlier age than the pressure of opinion from equals. From earliest infancy commands, accompanied by acts or gestures, are constantly being addressed to children. 'Go to your father', 'Take this', 'Come here'—as the child is lifted up, or pulled away from some object it must not touch. Until the age of 3-4, when they are walking and talking well, children appear to be indifferent to the presence of other children or indeed of adults other than their parents and members of their own family. I have watched two infants of 2-2½ years old, both walking, remain for over an hour within a few feet of each other without showing the least interest in each other. By the age of 3½-4 the Tale infant has emerged from this stage of egocentricity (as Piaget has termed it).¹ It will now run to join another child of this age or older, and likes to play with younger infants. It has now also become sensitive to public opinion to a degree not far short of an adult, and therefore capable of adjustment to others, as the following incident illustrates: I was chatting with Omara and a few other adult members of his house when his little daughter Sampana, aged about 3½ years, who knew me as a familiar and friendly visitor, ran out to see me. 'Give me some money,' she asked; and her manner, intonation, and posture were so like those of the grown-up women who often half-playfully asked me for money, that the whole company burst spontaneously into loud laughter. Sampana, obviously taken aback, turned tail and fled indoors where we found her sobbing with chagrin. 'She is ashamed at our laughter,' said Omara, still

¹ J. Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child*.

amused. When the child's mother tried to soothe her she first struggled and struck at her, venting her chagrin on her mother. It was fully ten minutes before her mother was able to quieten her by playing with her and distracting her by making her a toy of wet clay. 'They will laugh at him (or her)' or 'His comrades will laugh at him' is the commonest motive alleged for correct behaviour. If you ask a boy of 6 or 7 why he no longer plays with the little girls he says, 'If I do my comrades will laugh at me'; and little girls say the same. Adolescents, talking about their sweethearts, who are usually clan 'sisters', explain why they avoid the girls of their own section—'because our comrades will find out and laugh at us'; and the adult is equally sensitive to public opinion.

The total pattern and its genetic development. We have seen that these categories of social behaviour are not learnt in isolation one from the other but as patterns in which interests, elements of skill, and observances are combined. The Tale housewife, going several miles into the bush to collect firewood, is using knowledge of the bush tracks and of the best places for firewood acquired over a period of years; but she is impelled also by the sense of duty to her family and her own self-esteem. The Tale farmer's devotion to his agricultural pursuits is due to a passionate interest in land and crops and to a sense of moral responsibility towards his family and his ancestor spirits. His skill is but one of the factors that affect his general efficiency.

These total patterns which constitute the texture of Tale cultural behaviour are not built up bit by bit, by addition, during the course of a child's life. They are present as *schemas*¹ from the beginning. My observations suggest that the course of development is somewhat as follows: at first the child acquires a well-defined interest associated with a postural diagram of the total pattern. The postural diagram is, as it were, a contour map, extremely simplified and crude but comprehending the essential elements and relations of the full pattern. Further experience strengthens and amplifies the interest at the same time as it causes the details of the postural diagram to be filled out, making it more and more adaptable and controllable, producing more

¹ I have taken this concept from Prof. F. C. Bartlett's *Remembering*, pp. 199 ff., though its bald application here hardly does justice to the significance given to it by Prof. Bartlett, and to its value for an understanding of primitive education.

discriminatory responses to real situations, and linking it up with other patterns of behaviour and with norms of observance. The total pattern is not built up brick by brick, like a house, but evolves from the embryonic form.

A simple demonstration of this principle is provided by a child's learning to dance. A favourite amusement of women with infants just beginning to walk is to let them dance. The tiny tot, barely able to maintain an upright posture for ten minutes or so, is set up on its legs. A couple of women—usually the women of a homestead play with an infant thus when they have no work on hand—calling out to it, with laughter and warmth, 'Come on, dance', begin to sing and clap a dance rhythm and execute a few steps. Tale infants respond with every sign of pleasure to such stimulus and by the age of about 3 have learnt, in a sketchy and diagrammatic but specifically recognizable way, the rhythms and the main steps of the festival dances. The 6-year-old has advanced so far that he or she can sometimes join the real dancing of the adolescents. His sense of rhythm is accurate, he learns the songs quickly, and he has the pattern of the dance clearly. But his dancing is extremely crude still. It tends to be mechanical and monotonous, completely lacking the improvisations and variations, the delicate tracery of step and gesture with which the skilled adult fills out the formal pattern. Every year improves the child's style, but even the adolescent has not yet perfected his or her technique. Yet from babyhood to maturity dancing ability grows continuously.

A child's knowledge of the kinship structure evolves in the same way. The schema, rudimentary and unstable as yet, can be detected in the 3-4-year-old. He or she discriminates kinsfolk from non-kinsfolk, equating the former mainly with people living in close proximity. He knows his own father and mother precisely, but already calls his mother's co-wives 'mother'. Similarly, he knows that 'father' is his own father, but that other men—in the first instance those of the same joint family—are also 'fathers', and he knows that the other kinsfolk frequently seen are brothers, sisters, grandfather, grandmother. But he is still incapable of discriminating genealogical differences; he groups people by generation and by spatial proximity. Thus an adult brother may be described as a

'father'. A child learns the fundamental kinship terms and has the idea of distinguishing its relatives according to generation and genealogical distance long before it can couple this knowledge accurately with differential behaviour towards kinsmen. The 6-year-old knows the correct terms and appropriate behaviour defining its relations with the members of its own paternal family and has grasped the principle of classification according to descent. But in practice he still confuses spatial proximity and relative age with kinship, beyond the limits of his own family. The 10-12 year old has mastered the schema, except for some collateral and affinal kinsmen, the terms for whom are known though he cannot describe the relationships.

Biological drives and cultural motives combine to produce variations in the rates of evolution of different schemas. I have not the experimental data to give accurate or even sample norms, but a rough indication is possible. If the 6-year-old is compared with the 12-year-old in respect to e.g. knowledge of the kinship structure, of agricultural processes, of ritual, and of sex life, the 6-year-old is least advanced in knowledge of the kinship structure and ritual, and most advanced in his or her knowledge of sex life, while knowledge of agricultural processes could fall somewhere between these two levels.

V. FUNDAMENTAL LEARNING PROCESSES

In the course of the preceding discussion I have given several indications of how Tale children are taught and learn. But our investigation would be incomplete without a special consideration of the three fundamental processes utilized by the child in its learning—mimesis, identification, and co-operation. These are not the only learning techniques observable among the Tallensi, but they are the most important; and they usually appear not in isolation but in association with one another. They are most intimately interwoven in play, the paramount educational exercise of Tale children.

Mimesis. Writers on primitive education have often attributed an almost mystical significance to 'imitation' as the principal method by which a child learns. The Tallensi themselves declare that children learn by 'looking and doing'; but neither 'imitation' nor the formula used by the Tallensi help us to understand the actually observable process. Tale children do not automatically copy the

actions or words of older children or adults with whom they happen to be without rhyme or reason and merely for the sake of 'imitation'. For hours at a stretch mimetic behaviour may be unnecessary, but in certain types of situation it is the child's readiest form of cognitive adaptation.

Mimesis occurs (*a*) as a response to direct stimulation; (*b*) as an adaptation to a situation the child does not know how to deal with on the basis of its attainments at the time; (*c*) in play, when it is rehearsing in fantasy its interests and the life of the world about it. The Tale boy who learns the leatherworkers' or blacksmiths' craft by closely studying his father at his work and listening to his explanations, tentatively repeating the procedure with scraps of leather or iron and gradually perfecting his skill, is no more learning by imitation than our own children do when they learn arithmetic by copying procedures demonstrated on the blackboard. If he does not understand the craftsman's procedure the lad will never learn it.

We have already had examples of mimesis in response to direct stimulation—e.g. when an infant begins to learn to dance. A child's first efforts at talking are constantly stimulated in this way. At the babbling stage its mother or grandmother, or whoever is looking after it, will frequently in playful mockery mimic its babblings, 'What are you muttering there?' says the woman, 'gba-gba-gba-ma-ma . . .', and the infant is thus stimulated to repeat these sounds again and again. I have often observed incidents such as the following: Duun was playing with his little daughter of about 2. He called her, 'Kologo-o-o ee!' and she replied 'm!'; and again he called, and she replied; and so on for about five minutes. Then he said, 'Call the dog, wo-ho, wo-ho!' The infant repeated, 'Wo-wo!' Again he called the dog and the infant repeated the call, and so on several times. Some one spoke to him, and turning his attention from the child, he answered. The infant, still influenced by the set of the game, repeated, as well as she could, a word or two, much to his amusement. As we have seen, the expectation of normal behaviour influences parents to talk to infants as if they understand everything.

When there is a pair or a group of children together, the oldest or most self-possessed generally gives the cues to behaviour which the others follow. This is logical, since collective action must be common

or co-operative. Tale adults behave in exactly the same way. In an unfamiliar or difficult situation the best adaptation is to copy the actions and words of any one who understands the situation. Small children, whose schemas are still very rudimentary, are peculiarly apt to encounter unfamiliar elements in situations, and therefore readily resort to mimesis. Between the ages of 3 and 6 years, when the child is eagerly exploring its social space, this happens so often that it seems to develop a habit of mimicking older children in whose activities it is trying to participate. Thus, whenever I encountered little groups of children at play, pegging out goats, gleaning ground-nuts, or doing anything else, and asked the youngest, 'What are you doing?', one of the older children would reply, and the youngest repeat this reply in the same words. One evening I met four or five children from a neighbouring compound idling on a path. One was a girl of about 8 who had her brother of about 5 in tow. She noticed another child some way off and called out a message to him. The little brother, equally interested in the other child, called out and repeated the message in the same words and intonation. He was obviously not merely repeating automatically what he had heard, but endeavouring to draw the attention of the distant child and using the same method as his sister. A great deal of language learning goes on in this way.

Mimesis in play will be considered later.

Identification. A striking feature of social development among the Tallensi is the degree to which children overtly identify themselves with older siblings and parents. It is noticeable in children of 5 and 6 and becomes more marked as they grow older. The parent of the same sex is the model according to which the child regulates its conduct and from which it derives its aspirations and values. Though unwitting, the process is unmistakable. Character appears to run in families. An aggressive, loud-spoken man's children tend to become aggressive and pushing; an industrious man's sons apply themselves to work from early childhood; the dishonesty and unreliability of shiftY parents tend to be reproduced in their children; and so forth. The social structure of the Tallensi with its emphasis on family and lineage solidarity, and the unity of the social sphere, encourage such identification. If one asks a child, 'Who are you?' the answer is invariably, 'I'm so-and-so's child', or 'of so-and-so's family', accom-

panied by a manner or posture which leaves no doubt in one's mind as to who is his father or her mother. Nindəyat of Zubiung, for instance, was notorious for his selfishness, his arrogance, and his insincerity. His son Sapak, aged 6, was his father in miniature—self-assertive, greedy, combative and refractory. Ləyani, clansman and near neighbour of Nindəyat, was a complete contrast to him and the most popular man in the clan. His children were among the quietest, most respectful, and most good-tempered I knew. Once they were visiting me when Sapak thrust himself upon us. Within ten minutes he had managed to offend one of the other boys and but for my presence they would have come to blows. A similar contrast in character existed between Nənaab's small daughters and Saandi's. Indeed, it would be possible to cite a dozen examples of the way parental character reappeared in children, if space permitted.

A child says, 'This is *our* dog, *our* sheep, *our* land, *our* child, *our* wife', identifying himself completely with his family. Some of the examples given in our discussion of the unity of the social sphere show how identification operates to constitute that unity. It is, obviously, the mechanism mainly responsible for the child's acquisition of interests, and therefore generates powerful motives for following out these interests derived from the world of adult activity. Hence Tale children all want to grow up. I often asked boys of 10 to 12 why they were so keen on hoeing though it was far more arduous than herding or playing about with their friends. The question puzzled many, though they were always emphatic about preferring work on the farm to herding or play. But discussion generally resolved their motives into this: 'We want to hoe because we want to be among the men and help to bring in more food'; and girls have the same attitude about domestic work and child-bearing. One day I found a small boy of about 5 struggling with a large goat. 'Where's your father?' I asked. 'Hoeing his bush farm,' he said. 'What about you,' I said, 'can you hoe?' 'Of course I can,' he replied proudly, 'didn't I hoe the whole compound farm?' I teased him a bit, asking him about the details of farming, and eventually he said, 'No, I can't hoe. I'm still too small.' Similarly, a little girl of about 8 told me that she had accompanied some older girls to the bush for firewood the previous day. Her mother burst out

laughing and called to me: 'Don't believe her, she's much too small.' But these innocent fabrications illustrate the contents of children's identifications with adults.¹

Co-operation. Mention has previously been made of children's co-operation in the ordinary social and particularly economic activities in a manner and to an extent commensurate with their maturity at the time. But it must be referred to again in order to emphasize why it is specially important for children's learning. The little girl who goes with her mother to the water-hole and is given a tiny pot of water to carry is making only an infinitesimal contribution to the household's water supply. Yet it is a real contribution. She learns to carry her little pot of water in relation to a real need of the household. The boy at a sacrifice called to hold the leg of a carcass while it is skinned not only receives his first lessons in anatomy thus; he is performing a task necessary for the completion of the ceremony. The children summoned to carry balls of swish for the men building a house are contributing valuable labour. The child's training in duty and skill is always socially productive and therefore psychologically worth while to him; it can never become artificial or boring.

Yet as long as the child's co-operation is limited to subsidiary assistance—that is, until he reaches adolescence—it includes an element emanating from the child's own psychology, an element of play. Upon the adult Taləŋa the economic system bears down with a disciplinary and constraining effect. The house must be built, plastered, and thatched in time, before the rains come; the crops must be planted, hoed, harvested at the right moment, and the penalty for negligence is severe. The child cannot yet experience this. Its co-operation is still partly wish-fulfilment and has for it the attractions of an imaginative experiment. Thus, whenever there is building in progress, they play at building as well as help carrying swish; and the play part is for the child of equal importance with the work.

Play in relation to social development. The concept of play (*ba deemrame*, 'they are playing') is well defined and clearly recognized by the

¹ This exposition of identification is over-simplified in order not to burden the general argument. In Taleland, as elsewhere, it is not the sole determinant of character formation. It has been stressed here in order to underline its educational importance.



Recreational Play: *Kuobon* (posed)



A wrestling match—with an eye on the goat lest it
wander into the growing crops



Building Play. In the background a newly built room. On the right of the group a big boy demonstrating to a small boy. Behind them part of a 'house' they have finished. On the left, girls making the swish and explaining the process to the ethnographer's wife.



Learning Marksmanship. Note how intently the two smaller boys, who have only recently acquired real bows, are watching the technique of their older companion

Tallensi. The play of Tale children, it has been pointed out, emerges partly as a side-issue of their practical activities. It is also an end in itself, and has a noteworthy role in their social development. In his play the child rehearses his interests, skills, and obligations, and makes experiments in social living without having to pay the penalty for mistakes. Hence there is always a phase of play in the evolution of any schema preceding its full emergence into practical life. Play, therefore, is often mimetic in content, and expresses the child's identifications. But the Tale child's play mimesis is never simple and mechanical reproduction; it is always imaginative construction based on the themes of adult life and of the life of slightly older children. He or she adapts natural objects and other materials, often with great ingenuity, which never occur in the adult activities copied, and rearranges adult functions to fit the specific logical and affective configuration of play.¹

A typical play situation: How vividly these motifs appear in the play of Tale children will be evident to the reader if I describe shortly an actual play situation as I observed and recorded it. I shall describe a typical play episode among children at the transition from infantile egocentricity and dependence to social play and participation in peripheral economic activities. It will be noted how recreational and imaginative play are interwoven with practical activities and how infantile habits still persist. The children's interests fluctuate from moment to moment, egocentric attitudes alternate with co-operative play, and the economic task receives only sporadic attention. Later on we shall consider these factors in relation to the phases of development of children's play.

On a morning in June I found Gəmna, aged about 7, his half-sister Zəŋ, aged about 6, and his friend Zoo of about the same age out

¹ In this respect Tale children resemble our own children; cf. S. Isaacs, *Intellectual Growth in Young Children*, pp. 99-102. She sums up: 'Imaginative play builds a bridge by which the child can pass from the symbolic values of things to active inquiry into their real construction and real way of working. . . . In his imaginative play the child recreates selectively those elements in past situations which can embody his emotional and intellectual need of the present, and he adapts the details moment by moment to the present situation. . . .' Cf. also the same author's *Social Development in Young Children*, p. 425, 'Play . . . is supremely the activity which brings him [the child] psychic equilibrium in the early years.'

scaring birds on the home farm. They sat astride the trailing branch of a baobab tree on the boundary of Gəmna's father's farm and Zoo's father's farm. They slid down to talk to me, and a bigger lad, Təŋ, aged about 10, joined us. Gəmna had wandered off a few yards and now came running up with three locusts. He called to his sister and Zoo. Eagerly they squatted round the locusts. 'These are our cows,' said Gəmna, 'let's build a yard for them.' Zoo and the little girl foraged around and produced a few pieces of decayed bark. The children, Gəmna dominant, giving orders and keeping up a running commentary, set about building a 'cattle-yard' of the pieces of bark. Təŋ, the older boy, also squatted down to help. He and Gəmna constructed an irregular rectangle with one side open of the pieces of bark. Zoo fetched some more pieces of bark which Təŋ used to roof the yard. The little girl stood looking on. Gəmna carefully pushed the locusts in, one by one, and declared, 'We must make a gateway.' Rummaging about, the boys found two pebbles which they set up as gate-posts, with much argument as to how they ought to stand. Suddenly the whole structure collapsed and Təŋ started putting it up again. The little girl meanwhile had found a pair of stones and a potsherd and was on her knees, 'grinding grain'. Suddenly the two small boys dashed off into the growing grain, shouting to scare the birds. In a minute or two they returned to squat by the collapsed 'cattle-yard'. They appeared to have forgotten all about the 'cows', for they were engrossed in a conversation about 'wrestling'. Some one called Təŋ, who departed. Zəŋ, finishing her 'grinding', came up to the boys with the 'flour' on a potsherd and said, 'Let's sacrifice to our shrine.' Gəmna said indifferently, 'Let Zoo do it.' Zoo declared that Gəmna was senior to him, and an argument ensued as to who was senior. Eventually Gəmna asserted, 'I'm the senior.' Zəŋ meanwhile had put down her 'flour' which was quite forgotten; for Zoo challenged Gəmna's assertion. Gəmna retorted that he was undoubtedly senior since he could throw Zoo in wrestling. Zoo denied this, and in a few minutes they were grappling each other. Gəmna managed to throw Zoo and rolled over him; but they stood up in perfectly good temper, panting and proud. Suddenly with a shout Gəmna began to scramble up the baobab branch, followed by Zoo, calling out, 'Let's swing.' For a minute or two

they rocked back and forth on the branch and then descended. Now Gəmna remembered his cows. Vehemently he accused his sister of having taken them, and when she denied this challenged her to 'swear'. 'All right,' she said placidly. Gəmna took a pinch of sand in his left hand and put his right thumb on it. Zəŋ licked her thumb and pressed down with it on Gəmna's thumb-nail. He stood still a moment, then suddenly withdrew his thumb. (This is a children's play ordeal.) Gəmna examined his sister's thumb and found sand adhering. 'There you are,' he said, rapping her on the head with a crooked finger. The 'cows' were completely forgotten though, for now they turned their attention to me, asking me various questions. After a while Gəmna, who had been observing my shoes, said, 'Let's make shoes,' and took a couple of pieces of the decayed bark previously used to build the cattle-yard to make shoes. He and Zəŋ found some grass and old string lying about and tried to tie the pieces of bark to the soles of their feet. Gəmna now noticed his 'cows' and picked them up, but he was still trying to make 'shoes'. The 'shoes' refused to hold together so he abandoned them and squatted over his 'cows' for a moment, moving them hither and thither. 'I'm going to let them copulate,' he burst out with a grin, and tried to put one locust on top of another. Looking up, he noticed a flutter of birds' wings. 'Zəŋ,' he cried, jumping to his feet, 'scare the birds!' and he raced into the grain, followed by his companions, shouting and stooping to pick up handfuls of gravel to fling at the birds. For the next five minutes they were engrossed in bird-scaring. The entire episode lasted over half an hour.

The developmental phases of play. Infant play. Up to the age of 6 or 7 a good deal of play, especially that of boys, consists in sheer motor exuberance. Small boys run about, leap and prance for the pleasure of it, frequently in a totally unorganized way. But even 3-year-old boys often introduce mimetic themes, spontaneously or in response to suggestions from older children. They 'ride horses', using a long stick as a horse, with a wisp of grass attached as bridle. In the Festival season they love 'playing drums'. Cylindrical tins discarded by our cook and useless as receptacles were in great demand for this purpose. A remnant of goatskin tied over one end with a strip of bark or grass makes a satisfactory diaphragm, and a hooked twig

serves as a drumstick. Often an older boy of 8 or 9 manufactures a toy drum for himself or an infant brother. A small discarded calabash is covered with a piece of skin—a remnant of goatskin or the skin of a rat caught by the boy himself and prepared by himself. The skin is cleverly attached to the calabash with strong thorns. Small boys delight in walking round, tapping out a rhythm on a toy drum, sometimes executing a few dance steps. Another instrument they like to copy is the *kolog*, a single-string fiddle. I once saw a boy of about 6 singing to a 'fiddle' which consisted of a large bow made of a green stick and a thread of grass—the 'fiddle'—and a smaller bow of the same materials—the 'bow'. A bow of the very same sort with a short piece of thick reed as arrow is the 4- to 6-year-old's introduction to the handling of bow and arrow. They very soon develop an accurate aim at a dozen yards or so. Play of this kind is generally very ego-centric. I have watched groups of children playing side by side—a boy with a 'drum' absorbed in his banging, another lying on his back absorbed in fantasy, a couple of little girls playing at housekeeping—all indifferent to one another's activities.

The little girl of 3 to 6 plays in much the same way at times; but she is already being drawn into the family play of slightly older children, and, like the small boy with the toy bow, she tends to mimic simpler features of older girls' play when she is playing alone. Hence one often sees a little girl of this age sitting and playing at 'grinding millet'—one stone as metate, a smaller stone as muller, and a handful of sand or a potsherd as the grain.

Play in early childhood. Between the ages of about 6 and 10 the play of both sexes becomes more social and more complex. This is the period when the child is beginning to co-operate in real economic activities, subject to real responsibility, and is acquiring a knowledge of his social space. His or her play reflects these experiences and reflects also the interests and activities characteristic of the stage of maturity just ahead of it. There is, in all Tale children's play, this feature of looking ahead, as it were, experimenting tentatively with what lies just beyond the present psychological horizon.

During this period the younger children, both boys and girls, have charge of the goats, scare the birds from the newly planted fields and the crops, run errands, nurse the infants, and so forth. The boys help

in sacrifices to domestic shrines; the girls assist in household tasks such as sweeping and carrying water. Towards the end of this period boys whose fathers own cattle go out with the cattle-herds and girls are beginning to help in the preparation of food. A 10-year-old girl can prepare the majority of usual dishes. At the age of 6 or 7 brothers and sisters often play together; at 9 or 10 the sexual dichotomy has become firmly established.¹

At this stage the play of infancy develops in three directions. The sporadic motor exuberance is transformed into recreational play—organized group games and dances; the rudimentary mimetic play becomes elaborate and protracted imaginative and constructive play; and the rude toy-making of infancy grows into children's arts and crafts.

Tale children have a great many organized games, passed on from one generation of children to the next by drawing younger ones into the games played by those who already know them. The games are traditional, and often built round themes derived from the cultural idiom—farming, hunting, marriage, chiefs, &c. But their value is predominantly recreational. Children play them for the pleasure of collective singing, rhythmical physical activity, and sensory and bodily stimulation. The ordinary dances of moonlight nights in which both adults and children participate are regarded as 'play' of this kind.

Kuobon is a game of this sort. Both boys and girls from 7–8 to about 15 years play it on moonlight nights in single-sex groups. A group of about the same size forms a ring, clasping each other and standing on one leg. The other leg is extended towards the centre of the ring, and the children arrange themselves so that their extended legs cross one another. The group then commences to revolve, singing as they go round and round, *kuobon, yee-e-e la yaah*, 'fruits of farming, yee, how nice'. The game goes on until they are tired and the extended legs begin to drop. It breaks up with much laughter, only to start again after a rest. Similar games are played by boys only and others by girls only; but for both sexes dancing is the supreme recreation. In both the mixed dances and the single-sex

¹ Nevertheless, this sexual dichotomy is not so absolute as to prohibit a girl or a woman from stepping into a breach if there is no male available for a man's task; and men often undertake women's work in an emergency.

dances one invariably sees a few small boys or girls at the tail end of the line. At the beginning of the Festival season one often meets a group of children about 6-9 years old practising the dances in their play, crudely but recognizably.

At this stage, and till pubescence, boys spend a great deal of their leisure improving their dexterity with the bow and arrow. They now have bows like a man's but smaller, and real arrows with unbarbed heads. They go about in small groups practising marksmanship—shooting at a guinea corn-stalk or a chunk of wood. Sometimes they challenge one another and shoot according to certain rules. The loser forfeits an arrow to the winner. All this is recreational play; but it has a very practical aspect, recognized by adults and children. In Taleland the bow is the symbol of manhood; and every man must know how to wield it. The long years of practice necessary to become an accomplished shot begin with the small boy's first toy bow and extend through the play of childhood and pubescence. Part of this play-practice is the hunting of small field animals and birds. To the boy it is a real hunt, demanding knowledge and alertness and yielding a favourite titbit. Yet it is play as well, being neither obligatory nor dangerous, and being mimetically derived from an adult activity. This has great educational importance. The boy in his play identifies himself with the men, accepts their practical valuation of the bow and arrow, and tries out, as it were, what it feels like to be a man in this respect. Boys often hunt thus in groups, especially when they are out herding cattle, and share the spoil, thus training themselves in co-operation and fair dealing. By the age of 11-12 boys begin to accompany their fathers or elder brothers to real hunts, though they remain onlookers for the most part, whose principal task is to help carrying home anything killed. Not till adolescence will they be allowed to use barbed and poisoned arrows; but quasi-playful hunting thus shades over into the real activity for which it is a preparation.

Imaginative play is rich and frequent during this period, though its themes appear to be few. Family life, the principal economic activities, and domestic ritual supply the mimetic content. Sometimes children are entirely preoccupied with such play for hours at a time; often it is interwoven with practical activities or appears as a resonance of practical activities in which the children co-operate.

On any day in the dry season or the first half of the rainy season one can find a group of girls playing at housekeeping. Most commonly they consist of a group of sisters and ortho-cousins—two to four active participants with, perhaps, a couple of infants attached. Often one or two small boys of about 5 or 6 are in their company, sharing in their play or absorbed in their own separate play. In play, as in the simple economic duties, there is as yet no marked sex dichotomy at this age; and small boys are not ridiculed for ‘grinding grain’ and ‘cooking porridge’, or small girls for ‘building houses’ in play. The girls generally constitute a mixed age group, varying from 6 to 10–11 years, for even those who are already capable of real cooking enjoy playing at it. When they are of about equal maturity their play tends to be loosely organized. Each cooks for herself, but they help one another, lending one another ‘utensils’, ‘grain’, ‘firewood’, and exchanging ‘dishes of porridge’ like co-wives. When one girl is older than the others she tends to take the lead, and the smaller girls assist her on the pattern of daughter helping mother in real cooking. Infants are ‘our children’; and reliable informants have told me that small boys are said to be the ‘husbands’—but I have never observed boys being addressed thus, though I have watched housekeeping play very frequently. According to my observation, it is merely implied in the manner of distributing the ‘cooked porridge’, which follows the pattern of family feeding. Older girls sometimes introduce dolls as the ‘children’—clay figures of people made by themselves or, more usually, for them by their brothers.

The essentials of the play consist in ‘grinding flour’, ‘cooking sauce’ and ‘porridge’, and ‘sharing out’ the ‘food’. Every feature of the real processes is mimicked, but with the most ingenious imaginative adaptations. A pair of flattish stones or a boulder and a large pebble serve as ‘grindstones’. For pots, dishes, calabashes, and ladles various things are used—old sherds chipped into roughly circular pieces the size of a half-crown or crown, fragments of old calabashes, the husks, whole or bisected, of *molamok* or *kalam-poo*, spherical fruits of common trees varying in size from that of a large marble to that of a cricket ball, and even old tins or bits of tins, while some girls make little pots of clay. Pebbles make a fire-place, a thin piece of millet-stalk is the stirring-stick, some dried grass the firewood.

Sometimes a real fire is lit, but usually it is merely imagined. Real grain is never used in such play—it is too valuable to waste thus, as the children themselves would be the first to insist. A piece of potsherd pounded up or a handful of sand serves as grain; but a much more realistic effect is sometimes achieved by using dry baobab stamens. These can be ‘winnowed’ and the ‘grain’ ground. Green weeds and leaves are vegetables.

The children play with great zest and earnestness, yet never forget that it is but play. As they grind they hum in a low voice a grinding song they have heard from mother or elder sister. They examine the ‘flour’ to see that it is fine enough, try to get the right proportion of water, stir the ‘porridge’ thoroughly, ‘dish’ it out with scrupulous fairness. There is a constant interchange of conversation and commands to the smaller children: ‘Bring me that dish’, ‘Lend me your broom’, ‘That’s my firewood’, ‘Don’t stir so fast’, ‘Come and fetch your porridge’, and so on. As a rule they play together most amicably. I have observed arguments in such groups about who should do some task or another, but never quarrels. There is real co-operation, based on a distribution of tasks in play.

Such play is occasionally associated with a ‘house’ built of mud by a brother who often does not share the play, or actually uses the ‘house’ for his cattle play while his sisters are ‘cooking’ nearby. It is said, also, that housekeeping play sometimes branches into sexual play, little boys and girls pretending to be husband and wife and trying to copulate. Detailed inquiry shows that this is not common. The usual method of sexual experimentation at this stage of development follows the pattern of adolescence. Small boys ‘woo sweet-hearts’ with little gifts, and sexual experiments occur in connexion with dancing or by chance opportunities.¹

Girls’ housekeeping play ceases with the beginning of pubescence. Not only are they by then already taking a full share in real housekeeping but their interests are turning to youths and marriage. Housekeeping play, in which the child rehearses the interests which it has as yet neither the skill nor the degree of social development to satisfy, and expresses the wishes which pubescence brings near to realization, has served its purpose.

¹ See my paper on ‘Kinship, Incest and Exogamy’, loc. cit.

The corresponding play of boys at this stage is 'cattle-keeping'. It occurs more sporadically than the girls' play, particularly with older boys; but as much fantasy and invention go into it. Sometimes, indeed, it seems like an overt day-dream of leisure hours. One boy alone, or two, usually play. When the group is bigger more boisterous or recreational play ousts it—they wrestle, shoot arrows, gamble with ground-nuts, or at certain seasons pitch bangles and hoops of plaited reed. Boys of all ages are far less placid than girls.

The 'cattle' play involves constructing a 'house' in which the 'gateway' and the 'stable' are prominently indicated and finding something to serve as 'cattle'—sheep and goats never seem to enter. These activities, and moving the cattle about in and out of the 'stable', with murmured remarks in monologue or addressed to a companion, constitutes the play. I have never been able to record this accompanying speech as I have always had to watch cattle play from a distance. Boys say that it is 'about bulls and cows'.

'Cattle' play has more of pure fantasy and less reproduction of real activities than 'housekeeping' play. Sometimes the 'house' and 'stable' are built of mud—a circular 'wall', 9 or 10 inches in diameter and 2 inches high, with a space left for the 'gateway', and a smaller circle of mud adjoining it as the 'stable'—to last for a whole dry season. Often it is constructed *ad hoc*—two circles drawn in the sand or made of heaped-up sand may be enough. A great variety of objects serve as 'cattle'. Boys who like modelling may make clay figures of cows and bulls for their play; bits of sticks, leaves of a common shrub which can be opened so as to stand up on their edges, pebbles, and other things are used. Yet despite the meagre materials and the paucity of mimetic content the play fascinates boys from the age of 5 or 6, when they are still too young to go out with the herds, to about 12, when they may be full-blown herd-boys. Even if their families have no cattle and they have never followed a herd regularly, they play at it. The interest and identification are active nevertheless.

At this stage, too, domestic ritual begins to be reflected in the play of boys. A boy's or girl's schema of ritual and religious ideology at the age of 9 or 10 includes the main structural principles of the system. As his knowledge has been acquired by attending at sacrifices, he knows most about the ritual acts and conventional formulas connected

with sacrifice and least about the beliefs and theories. He is familiar with all the concepts of Tale religion and magic but cannot assign them accurately to their relevant contexts. He knows that ancestor spirits and medicines are different, and can even describe some of the latter by their functions, but cannot elucidate these differences. He knows also and believes that health, prosperity and success depend on mystical agencies, that sickness, death, and misfortune are caused by them, and that sacrifices must be made to placate them or to expiate offences. He has heard talk of all this and seen consultations of diviners. As an infant, perhaps, he has been called by his mother to get off a partition wall 'lest the spirits push you off', or has seen food put out 'for the spirits' during the ritual festivals. He knows what different types of shrines look like and what are their appurtenances. But it is surface knowledge, confused in details and full of gaps.

Ritual is men's business, though women are well versed in it. Hence it emerges mostly in the play of boys and not of girls. Significantly, it is permitted till pubescence, that is, as long as a boy is not likely to take a responsible part in real ritual. After that he is liable to have to accept an ancestor spirit demanding real sacrifices and may no longer play at it. At 13 or 14 years of age, when a boy's ritual schemas approximate those of an adult, he fully understands and acquiesces in this prohibition. It suggests, however, that playing at ritual has a different value for children than actual ritual has for adults. Children share the adults' interest in ritual and accept its prescriptions, but not the adults' emotional relationship to ritual. In their play they express this interest and their identifications, rehearse their knowledge, and integrate it with the rest of their educational achievements.

Small boys build shrines a few inches high for themselves in a corner of the cattle-yard. They take great pains to achieve verisimilitude and neatness, and their inventiveness is remarkable. *Kalampoo* husks are turned into medicine-pots; fragments of calabash or potsherd represent the hoe-blade which is essential to many ancestor shrines; a pronged twig is a shrine's 'tree'; the tail of a stillborn kid or lamb, tied with string and feathers in the same way as adults do, is a shrine's 'tail'; another object commonly dedicated to real shrines. There are 'roots'—of grass—as in adult medicine-pots, and other appurtenances.

Whenever they build miniature houses, during the building season, 'shrines' are added and, as in real life, each has his own.

Play with these shrines is woven into other play activities, and it revolves around sacrifice. When a small boy goes out hunting for fieldmice or birds, if he happens to have a 'shrine' he will 'give it water', i.e. pour a libation to it. Ashes represent flour, which is stirred up in water as in a real sacrifice. He invokes the shrine, 'My father' (but never mentioning names as in real sacrifice since his own father is probably still alive), 'accept this water and grant that I have successful hunting. If I kill an animal, I will give you a dog.' Some time later he may catch a live mouse, and when he has played with it to satiety he 'sacrifices' it on his shrine—this is the promised 'dog'. A nestling bird found alive is 'sacrificed' as a 'fowl' or 'guinea-fowl'. If he finds a live mouse or bird by chance it will always be taken home and 'sacrificed' thus before it is cut up and eaten. Taboos like those of adults are invented for his shrines. Fetishes, like those of adults, accept only red and black 'fowls'; other shrines only white ones. Siikaoni, a small boy of about 7 or 8, built himself a *loo* fetish, which can be dispatched to 'tie up' any one who might interfere with one's enterprises. Siikaoni pretended to use his *loo* to keep the parents of his 'sweetheart' out of the way when he went to see her—a frequent use of a real *loo* by young men.

Of the imaginative and constructive play produced as a response to current social activities in which children co-operate, I shall instance only building. During the building season a favourite pre-occupation of the children is to build miniature rooms or houses. It is a co-operative group enterprise, boys and girls frequently working together, led by a boy of about 12-13. It is carried on in the intervals between helping the men. Sometimes they are content to build only walls, a few inches high, but when the leader is keen they undertake a complete replica of a house—walls a foot or more high, several rooms properly arranged, a roof, a beaten inner court, and shrines. The work goes on for days on end and needs planning and organization. The girls and smaller boys make the swish and roll it into pellets, the older boys do the actual building, often with extraordinary skill. When the 'house' is built and roofed and the walls have dried, if the

enthusiasm for building still lasts, the girls plaster the walls and beat the inner court in the way they have learnt by assisting their mothers with these tasks in connexion with the real house.

Children's arts and crafts have a play value in that they are practised purely for pleasure and have a seasonal incidence. But they demand considerable skill of eye and hand, and individual differences in ability are noticeable. Towards the end of the rainy season a strong and supple reed springs up in profusion along the watercourses. Young people and children pluck these reeds to plait bangles, necklets, small panels to hang over the chest as decorations, and waistbands. These things are worn by young and old at the festival dances. But whereas the young men and women plait sporadically a few things for themselves, their sweetheart, or a child, children do so continuously and absorbedly. From July to September one sees them sitting about or strolling about in small groups, plaiting reed decorations. The boys have a game played by tossing or bowling the reed bangles and waistbands at a mark. A group plays, and the winner collects all. Girls of all ages love decking themselves from head to foot in this reedware. The technique of plaiting these articles, which is the same as that employed in the manufacture of a number of utilitarian objects, is fairly elaborate. It is gradually learnt between the ages of about 8 and 11.

Less widely practised is the art of modelling clay figures. Girls sometimes model, but it is chiefly a diversion of boys. Cattle and other animals, humans, horses accoutred and with riders astride are the usual subjects. A taste for modelling appears to depend on talent to a great extent. Many boys never acquire the art; others take such delight in it that they devote the whole dry season to producing dozens of clay figures for themselves, brothers and sisters, and friends. Gifted boys model extremely cleverly. I knew two boys of 12 or 13, sons of a chief, who made clay horses and manufactured saddlery and trappings of old rags and bells and ornaments of pieces of tin to adorn the figures. Older boys or youths teach small boys by correcting errors they make in modelling; but I have never found a boy of under 8 or 9 years able to model well.

Play from pubescence to adolescence. The last stage of childhood coincides with the rapid absorption of the child into the economic

system and his or her gradual acquisition of a responsible status in the social structure. By the age of 14 or 15 most girls are already married or being courted in marriage. They take their household duties more lightly perhaps than older women with children, but their childhood education is complete. Their education in the duties and responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood lies outside the scope of this paper. 'To play' now means to join in the dance or to dress up and go to market, there to gossip and flirt. These are recreations merely, like conversation in the evening after a good meal, when the whole family sits or sprawls about in one of the inner courts or in front of the gateway. Such 'play' is educative in quite a different sense to that of childhood.

Boys, too, between the ages of 12 or 13 and 16 to 18 are at the stage of transition from childhood to young manhood. The imaginative play still prominent at the beginning of this period is given up by degrees and usually altogether abandoned when puberty is established. Like the adolescent girl, the boy of 16 or so finds his principal recreation in the dance at certain seasons. He, too, begins to frequent markets when time permits, for he is greatly preoccupied with the opposite sex, with courtship and flirtations and even transient love affairs, and there is no place like the market for pretty girls. An adolescent youth is already applying the deftness and skill acquired in juvenile play or in the arts and crafts of his boyhood to practical ends. A 16-year-old takes an active part in building and thatching and in the manufacture of bows and arrows, or in the practice of crafts like leatherwork or the forging of tools and implements.

The transition from boyhood to manhood can readily be observed in the development of farming interests and skill during this period. The boy of 10 to 12 is extremely keen to plant, hoe and weed. Helping his father, he sows ground-nuts for himself amongst his father's early millet. Frequently he has a small plot of cereals, a few yards square, in a useless corner of one of his father's fields. He hoes and plants and weeds his plot with great energy and zest, though somewhat crudely, borrowing one of his father's discarded hoes for this purpose. He assists his mother to farm her ground-nuts and beans. But his efforts make no difference to the family commissariat or to the care and sustenance given him by his parents. He is still

experimenting without responsibility, though with great earnestness. Two or three years later the play element has vanished. If he cultivates a personal plot he makes an effort to beg land which is agriculturally good, and works with the avowed purpose of obtaining a crop which, though minute compared with the needs of the family, suffices to buy himself a cap or a loin-cloth. The time he can now devote to his own plot or to his own ground-nuts must be adjusted in accordance with his responsibilities as a contributor to the family economy.

With boys, therefore, as with girls, the completion of their childhood education marks the end of childhood play. Mimetic and imaginative experimentation becomes redundant when the individual attains social responsibility and maturity. The play of Tale children changes, as we have seen, *pari passu* with their advancing maturity, contributing at each stage to the elaboration and integration of those interests, skills, and observances the mastery and acceptance of which is the final result of their education.

VI. SYNOPTIC CHART OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In conclusion, and in order to bring the preceding analysis of the education of Tale children to a focus, I append a synoptic chart setting out the main trends of the development of their interests and skills as these are reflected in their economic duties and activities, on the one hand, and in their play on the other. The reader will realize that these norms are necessarily crude and approximate. I have not ventured to include observances in the chart, since the trend of their acquisition cannot easily be analysed into approximate stages.

CHART OF DEVELOPMENT

BOYS

Economic Duties and Activities

Play

3-6 years

None at first. Towards end of this period begin to assist in pegging out goats; scaring birds from newly sown fields and from crops; accompany family sowing and harvesting parties; using hoe in quasi-play to glean ground-nuts in company of older siblings.

Exuberant motor and exploratory play. Use mimetic toys (bow, drum, &c.) in egocentric play. Towards end of period social and imaginative play with 'cattle' and 'house-building' commences, often in company of older children of either sex, as well as recreational games and dancing.

6-9 years

These duties now fully established. Help in house-building by carrying swish. Assist in sowing and harvesting. Towards end of period begin to go out with the herd-boys, and to care for poultry.

Imaginative 'cattle' and 'house-building' play common, the latter often reflecting current economic activity of adults. Practice with bow and arrow in marksmanship competitions, and 'hunting' with groups of comrades begun. Recreational games and dancing established. Modelling clay figures and plaiting begun. Ritual play begun.

9-12 years

Fully responsible cattle-herding. Care for poultry. Assisting parents in hoeing and care of crops, but without responsibility. Farming own small plots and ground-nuts but in quasi-play. Sons of specialist craftsmen assist fathers in subsidiary capacity—'learning by looking'.

Further development of preceding forms of play, especially of ritual play. Clay-modelling and plaiting established. Recreational games and dancing more skilful. Quasi-play farming.

Sexual dichotomy in work and play established.

12-15 years

Duties as in preceding period but more responsible. Responsible care of poultry, sometimes own property. Leaders of herd-boys. Real farming of own plots and in co-operation with older members of family established by end of period. Sons of specialists experimentally making things.

Imaginative play abandoned. Dancing the principal recreation. Ritual play abandoned. Modelling gradually abandoned. Plaiting for personal decoration mainly. Regular sweet-heating commences.

GIRLS

*Economic Duties and Activities**Play**3-6 years*

None at first. Towards end of period the same duties as small boys. Frequent nursing of infants. Accompany mothers to water-hole and begin to carry tiny water-pots. Help in simple domestic tasks such as sweeping.

Exuberant motor and exploratory play. Attached to older sisters and drawn into their 'housekeeping' play. Towards end of period begin to take active social part in the latter and begin recreational play and dancing. Often found in mixed sex groups.

6-9 years

Duties of previous period established. Responsible co-operation in water-carrying and simpler domestic duties. Help in cooking and in activities associated with food-preparation, such as searching for wild edible herbs. Accompany family parties at sowing and harvesting, giving quasi-playful help. Carry swish at building operations and assist women in plastering and floor-beating, but still with a play element.

'Housekeeping' play usual. Recreational play and dancing established. Begin to learn plaiting. Participate in 'building' play of boys, mimicking current women's activities, e.g. plastering.

9-12 years

All domestic duties can be entrusted to them by end of this period—water-carrying, cooking, care of infants, &c. Assisting in building and plastering, &c., more responsibly. Often sent to market to buy and sell. Help in women's part of the work at sowing and harvest times.

'Housekeeping' play continues, gradually fading out at end of this period. Dancing becomes principal recreation. Plaiting both for decoration and use established. Begin to have sweethearts but not yet with serious intent.

Sexual dichotomy in work and play established.

12-15 years

Responsible part in all domestic duties of everyday life, and of those associated with ceremonial occasions. Go for firewood and collect shea-fruits in the bush, and help to prepare shea butter. (Marriage a very near prospect.)

Imaginative play abandoned. Dancing the main recreation. Courtship and hetero-sexual interests occupy a great deal of time and attention. Actively participate in the social side of funeral ceremonies, &c., in the role of marriageable girls.

Note. Care of infants and children is a duty of girls at all ages. Boys also are frequently entrusted with this task.



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